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Adventurer

THE SUPERIOR FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION GAMES MAGAZINE

Editorial

Having enjoyed a merry and festive holiday, **Adventurer**'s thoughts turned to religion for this issue-

We have three back-to-back articles on religion for players and GMs, and in our very own fantasy campaign world of SCATOPHAGIUM, we look to the Church Of The White Zone for comfort (?) and solice(!).

To reply to all those who asked for SF, A.J. Bradbury presents a SF scenario which gives your PCs some serious thinking to do. The SF flavour continues with our short story on page 30. It concludes, as always, with Wendy Graham's pedestrian look at topical SF in the media.

The debate on women in roleplaying continues with a look at the female gender of non-human species.

All this and our regular features as well as another gem of a cover by Robin Parry. And no poster!

Ste Dillon.

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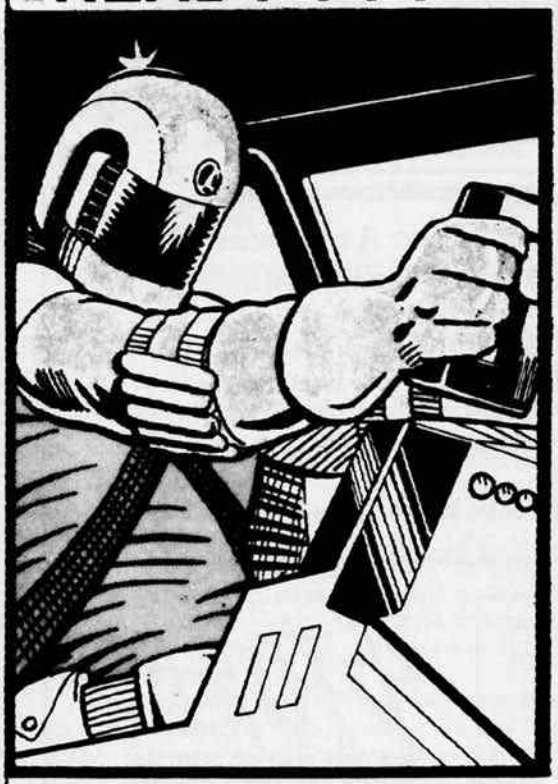

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FIGURES FRONT

By Martyn Tetlow & Mike Willis

FRONT LINE:

Essex Miniatures are probably best known to table-top wargamers for their ranges of historical figures in both 25mm and 15mm scales, but for the past few years, they have been producing an interesting range of 25mm **fantasy** figures, equally suitable for wargames or role-playing games, and with some very eye-catching pieces for the collector.

Essex first appeared in 1980, manufacturing 25mm historical figures designed by **Brian Gregory**, but it wasn't until 1984 that the fantasy range was introduced. Probably the most memorable feature of these was the great variety of 'monsters' available; a range which rivalled (and surpassed) the old **Asgard "Dungeon Adventurers"** range, leaving only the random bulk of **Citadel Miniatures** in this country, and the gradually emerging **Grenadier Models (UK)** to rival Essex for variety. Quickly following this came the ever-increasing hoards of the **Great Scaley Orc Tribe**, subsequently surpassed in fame by the memorable busty **Barbarian Women Warriors!**

After outgrowing their initial nursery unit, Essex moved to their current premises on **Canvey Island** in 1985, where they are frantically trying to make space for their growing ranges. Although larger than their previous premises, Brian maintains that it seems to be shrinking rapidly! Brian Gregory and his wife **Christine** run Essex with the aid of six employees. In August 1985, Essex bought **Mike's Models'** most popular 15mm wargame ranges, and since then have been gradually remaking and remoulding many of the models which weren't up to scratch, giving themselves a pretty comprehensive range.

Quite a large proportion of their output is sold abroad, with distributors in the ***U.S.A., Australia, France and Germany***. At present, it seems that ***Paris*** can't get enough of the new fantasy ranges which prompts Mr. Gregory to comment on the good taste of the French gaming public.

These latest fantasy figures, a selection of which are shown overleaf, have been introduced under the code **"Q"** prefix, designed and manufactured to top quality specifications. The figures come 'as they are', not boxed, as Essex's sales philosophy is to sell a quality product, not its superfluous fancy packaging! To quote, ***"It's up to the customer to look beyond the blister, and consider the quality of the figure he is purchasing."***

It isn't often that this humble correspondent lays claim to a scoop (hold the front page and all that...), but I can now name Essex's new ace designer of the **"Q"** range; arguably one of the finest designers in the country at present (remember, you read it here first...), his name is **Bob Olley**, and he has a style all of his own:- note the Satyr-headed giant for instance (see overleaf). His figures, as with all of the Essex ranges, are slightly larger than most other 25mm figures, and are beautifully sculpted, with items like the chain mail deeply cut, which makes painting them very easy.

New items on Bob's drawing board at the moment include **Oriental-style Fantasy Characters, Chaotic Dwarves, Chaotic Fighters, Gladiators** and **Wolves**. Noteable among these is the introduction of the **"Dwarves from the Kingdom of Termic"**, designed to produce a consistent army of these stunted gentle-folk to rival that produced by **Asgard** a couple of years ago. These will be followed by **"Cursaa's Orcs", Amazonians, Sorcerers**, etc., all with the same consistency of design and scale. Future plans are to release a **Legions Of The Undead** range of skeletons, zombies, etc. Obviously aimed at both the collector and the gamer who enjoys uniformity and continuity in his campaign, I wouldn't be at all surprised to see a campaign pack for the Kingdom of Termic before too long.

Modellers with a taste for the more (shall we say) ***exotic***, will be queuing up for the **Chaos Turtle with Dwarven Catapult** on its back (Now that's what I **call** a tank!), and the **Chaos Bear with Howdah**, occupied by Dwarves, of course.

Before you flood Essex with enquiries, however, there is no set release date for these biggies just yet, but there will be a fully-illustrated catalogue of the new fantasy figures available shortly.

UP FRONT:

The final appearance of a figure can be enchanced considerably by fixing it to a base. There are several reasons why this could be desirable, the existing base might need to be a specific size to comply with a set of wargames rules, or you might wish to have more room to add embellishments such as boulders, plants or broken weapons.

Figures can be based either individually (for role playing games) or in multiples of 2, 3 or more (for wargames units). As a rule, it is more convenient to paint single figures **after** basing and wargames figures **before** basing.

For square or hexagonal bases I prefer to use plastic card, although balsa wood and art mount board are just as good (if somewhat thicker), and for round bases I use coins (1p or 2p pieces) or washers. File the existing base and then stick it to the new base using an epoxy resin, or superglue.

The next step is to obsure the original base by building up the area around it with a suitable filler or putty. Personally, I prefer to use *tetron filler*, as it adheres well, sets rock hard hard and has a grainy texture ideal for dry brushing, *'Polyfilla'* and *'Fix and Grout'* are also suitable. All of these are cheap and easily available from DIY shops. Apply the filler to the base using a small knife blade or small screwdriver and then form it into shape using an old paint brush slightly moistened with water. These fillers can also be thinned with water, making it easier to apply them around fine detail such as feet, claws and hooves.

As an alternative you can use a self hardening modelling clay (**DAS**) or even an epoxy putty (**milliput**), although the latter is more suited to making scenic embellishments such as boulders and planets. Both of these items are available from art and hobby shops but are more expensive than, eg, Tetrion so are more suited to single figures than wargames units. Modelling clay is somewhat harder than filler, but can be made more pliable by moistening it slightly with water; it can then be moulded around the figure base using an old brush or craft knife.

One great advantage of clay is that it holds its shape while setting, so it can be finely shaped and textured. Eg. the surface can be 'stippled' using a pin or cocktail stick to give a realistic grass effect.

These bases can be simply finished by painting. For a 'rocky' or 'paved' look, use a grey undercoat followed by a wash of dark brown or thinned black ink or acrylic paint, dry brushed with a creamy white.

ESSEX MINIATURES

Fig. 1. Q84- Giant with pet Giant Lizard on Chain.
Painted by Martyn Tetlow.

Fig. 6. Detail of 1.

Fig. 7. Detail of 1.

Fig. 3. Q72- Evil Sorcerer w/Skeleton Head Banner.
Painted by Martyn Tetlow.

Fig. 5. Q35- Orc in Chainmail, w/Cutlass & Dagger.
Painted by Mike Willis.

Fig. 2. Q46- Eastern Sorcerer with Medusa Touch!
Painted by Mike Willis.

Fig. 8. Detail of 2.

Fig. 9. Detail of 4.

Fig. 4. Q63- Crowned Zombie Leader with Sword & Shield.
Painted by Mike Willis.

Sorcerer King

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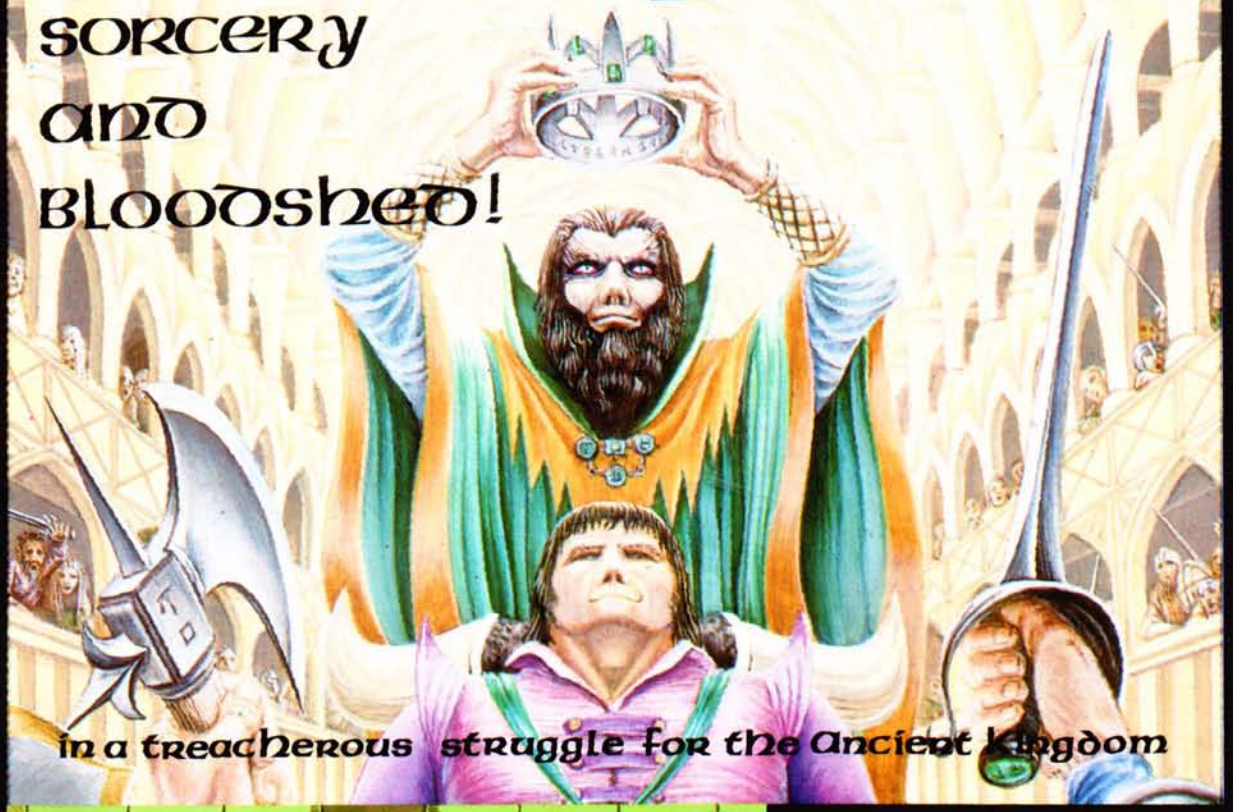

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Part II Non-Human Females
By Janet Vialls

More Deadly than the Male

♀ This issue, I want to show that women of other races should have their own nature and personalities, rather than being merely pale reflections of their menfolk. At the outset, I stress that these are only *suggestions*; since all these races are imaginary, whether the products of collective imagination (ie myths and folk-lore), or individual creativity. Hence, any referee can, of course, do exactly what she likes with them, without being informed of their historical innacuracy.

In considering non-human races, an important but fairly obvious point, relating to genetics, is frequently ignored; most individuals will normally prefer a member of their own species as a sexual partner, and be most attracted by members of their own species. Of course, there'll always be exceptions, resulting from odd circumstances, especially with races which are physically similar (such as humans and elves), but such affiliations will always be rare. A gnoll will find a human as unattractive as a human finds a gnoll. If this were not so, few of the races would survive for long. Also, half-breeds resulting from these unions are almost certain to be sterile (for example, mules).

♀ Female **elves** are frequently assumed to be at least as powerful as their male counterparts. It is quite common to see elven society giving different but equal roles to its male and female members. Indeed, some elven societies are even seen as matriarchal (Eg, the **Drow**). Individual elven women are frequently portrayed as having great, if ill- defined, magical powers. In folklore, elven women are primarily beautiful and dangerous (if not actually evil). Their major roles in folk tales are to bring temptation and destruction on the noble (male) heroes who encounter them. There are exceptions, but women who actually take active roles are invariably seen as evil, (does this say something about the frailty of male egos?). But this need not be so. For one thing, can humans be certain that elves share human standards of beauty? Perhaps those alluring elven women are considered plain, or downright ugly by their own people. Does this explain their desire to lure human males? Equally, how can humans be sure that they understand how elven women feel or why they act as they do? An elf is not a human and should not be played as such!

To digress slightly, a problem with elves generally, not just elven women, is that they are invariably not given an alien enough feel. They are not simply 'scaled down humans with pointed ears', but something alien and incomprehensible to humans. (The advertisements for **Dragon Warriors** claimed that the game would give them back their strange -ness, but the game itself simply Waxed lyrical about vast treasure hoards, and included an extremely silly picture). To give elves a feeling of being alien, a GM or player must try to bring across the effects of their long life. A young elf has ten centuries of life ahead of her; as such, there will be ample time for whatever she may wish to do. Humans, with their desperate attempts to complete all their wishes within a handful of decades, should be pitied, not despised. The older the elves, though, the more likely they are to withdraw from human company. They will find humans immature, obsessed with petty matters such as gold and the opposite sex, and very hurried. Most elves will try to be understanding, being aware of the short lives that humans are cursed with, but still find them brash, annoying and purile.

The longevity of elves has one major effect on the lives of females; children need only be born rarely, and even allowing for a longer pregnancy and childhood for elves, the female will have far less of their time taken up with family- raising and far more time for other activities. Elven women may welcome this interlude in their other activities, or it may interrupt an otherwise all-consuming 'Career'.

Because of the similarities between elves and humans, romantic attachments may form. However, elven society at least, is going to be aware of the great tragedy that can result from a relationship between an elf and a human. There is likely to be considerable social pressure, from both communities. However, love can be a powerful force, and there will be couples who choose to ignore the social mores and brave the troubles of a life together. The great difference in life expectancy will be a major barrier. Also, despite physical similarities, the two races are very different *psychologically*. Traditionally, elves are soulless, and are frequently *detached* in their outlook. The human partner in a relationship may begin to regard this as coldness. As he grows elderly, he may begin to suspect, whether justly or unjustly, that his still attractive wife is seeking other lovers. The elven partner, on the other hand, will have the heartbreak (assuming that she is capable of such an emotion), of watching her loved one grow old and die, whilst she remains young. She may also come to realise how shallow her human lover is. The relationship may not survive these strains for more than a few years. All this forms the background into which half-elf children are born, and the atmosphere in which they'll grow up. They are likely to be very aware of the stresses between their parents. The human parent may grow impatient with the relatively slow development of their child. *('Isn't she walking yet? **Scalina's** daughter was born two months later, and is running all around the village! Is she stupid, or what?').* Without going into details of the psychological effects of such an atmosphere on a child, it is clear that the child could well end up somewhat disturbed, possibly leading it to grow up into a delinquent- such as an **adventurer**. A female child will have the problem of barrenness, which would be likely to make her unmarriageable, despite her likely good looks.

♀ One still unresolved problem concerning **dwarven** women is; do they or don't they? Have beards, I mean. Giving them beards would certainly explain the lack of reference to dwarven women in folk-lore or mythology. Humans just couldn't tell the difference! On the other hand, beardless dwarven women may be easier for players to relate to. However, saying that they have beards does not mean that dwarven men will lust after human women. As I stated above, humans would simply not seem attractive to dwarves. If dwarven men do prefer beardless women, then either dwarves would have died out long ago, or dwarven women would routinely shave! More likely, the dwarven ideal of beauty would include a fine growth of beard. Presumably the explanation for female dwarves being so rarely portrayed in artwork is that they don't provide suitable material for male adolescents to ogle in the way elven women do...

So much for the *appearance* of dwarven woman, but are there any person -ality traits common among them? This is perhaps a dangerous area to get into, as all characters should be first and foremost individuals. However, this is not inconsistent with outlining suggestions for general traits. For example, dwarven women may have a characteristic fondness for gems and jewelry of all kinds. They glitter and sparkle in the torchlight of their cavern homes. Also, many dwarven women may have as great a fondness for ale as their menfolk, and when they have been partaking, they have better singing voices. In fact, it is the dwarven women who carry the secrets of the dwarven ales, passing recipes from mother to daughter. Dwarven men tend to be a little patronising and possessive of their women folk. For the most part, the women are equally patronising about their menfolk, knowing that they hold the true secrets of dwarven society. Some dwarven women, however, do fight alongside (or against) their menfolk, and many of these become adventurers. Such females are of course, beyond the pale as far as most dwarven men are concerned.

♀ Turning away from truly mythological creatures, we come to those gourmets of the role-playing worlds, **Hobbits**. In **'The Hobbit'** and **'Lord of the Rings'**, female Hobbits (as with all Tolkien's other women) are almost invisible. The only one drawn in any depth

or with any personality is *Lobelia Sackville-Baggins*, and she is painted in an unfavourable light. However, for all her faults, she is in the end revealed as having reserves of strength greater than many of the hobbit men.

This suggests to me two alternatives for the natures of hobbit women; they might be like their men-folk, but raised to the 'Nth' degree. That is, they are more sneaky, more skilled thieves, and above all- more hungry! If this is so, they will be regarded with awe and perhaps some jealousy by their men-folk.

On the other hand, a female hobbit may be the practical and organised one, regarding her men-folk as childish and juvenile, and may treat them with condescension. Well, somebody's got to keep male hobbits in order, haven't they... Such a woman will normally stay at home and run the household, only being foolish enough to venture outside her domain when one of her charges has got himself into some serious trouble in the domain of the humans (assuming that she slipped up by letting her men leave home). If nothing else, this view of female hobbits gives a very different motive for an adventurer.

Perhaps the most frightening image could be achieved by combining the two. Imagine the scene: The party are feeling pleased with themselves after finally capturing the hobbit thief who had been plaguing them for weeks. They are quite unaware that they have a far more deadly enemy tracking them, as the hobbit's wife/ lover/ mother seeks revenge...

Certainly, I would expect there to be more female hobbits in fantasy gaming than there actually appear to be; after all, male hobbits are small, cute and bashable (not to mention delicious when baked), and there seems no reason why female hobbits should not fulfill the same role equally well (if not better). This is what feminism should be - letting women take an equal role with their men!

♀ As a general policy, I try to treat members of **all races** as characters, giving them free will and therefore individu -ality. With the exception of summoned or certain other magical creatures, no creature is automatically evil. Of course the culture and the dominant religion of a race will mean that members of that race have a particular view of life, but there should be no such thing as a 'racial alignment', only an individual or cultural one. This leads to much more interesting and different role playing situations, as well as interesting people. I could sum up the philosophy with the phrase *'Orcs are People Too!'*.

♀ Female **Orcs** occur nowhere (so far as I know) in Tolkien, and I have come across none elsewhere. For some reason, in AD&D, it was decreed that they be far fewer in number than their men-folk. This is quite illogical and ridiculous, especially when combined with the warlike nature of the men. With male orcs forever dying in battle, the women are likely to vastly outnumber them. To say that orcs naturally produce significantly more boy-children than girl-children is one possible answer, but that gives other problems. For instance, orcs are often assumed to breed like rabbits (a necessity, considering the normal orc mortality rate). Any biologist will tell you that it is the number of *females* that is the critical factor restriting the breeding rate of a species, so to produce more little orcs you need a large number of orc women.

Irrespective of the numbers, however, they really ought to have some personality. Assuming for the moment that orcish society is **patriarchal**, it could well contain orcish equivalents of all the types mentioned last issue. But need orcish society always be patriarchal? Perhaps the reason female orcs are so rarely seen is because they remain at home, sending the menfolk to do the dangerous and difficult works, from which they reap the rewards. Imagine a party, having been captured by an orc band, being presented to their leader, to be confronted with a large, powerful and bejewelled orc woman.

After Orcs, it's natural to look at **Half-Orcs**. GMs are often very casual about introducing 'half-breed' characters into their campaigns, without necessarily thinking about where they came from. Half-orcs are usually assumed to be the result of the rape of human women by an orc, but need that necessarily be true? Love, as has been remarked on many occasions, is a very peculiar thing. Imagine a human male wounded, and found by an orcish woman. Maybe she is despised by, or an outcast from her own people for some reason, and in her loneliness decides to tend the adven- turer. All right, he's no match in looks for an orcish man, but couldn't affection or even love grow between them? Of course, their lives would not be easy, as it is unlikely that either orcish or human society would accept them, and if nothing else, the difference in life expectancy would lead to eventual tragedy, as with the half-elf. He may frequently have to protect her from human adventurers who assume an orc is automatically evil, whilst she may have to protect him from the orcish equivalent. The children of such a couple, too, would have an awkward time, providing ample motivation for taking to the adventuring life. This is perhaps, especially true for the female children. In many fantasy societies the main (or only) virtue a woman can have is good looks; ugliness often equated with evil. As such, a female half-orc being tougher than a human woman, and with few prospects of finding a respectable place for herself in human society, and with a chip on her shoulder, is **ideal** adventurer material.

♀ Much about what I have said about orcs also applies to **Goblins, Gnolls etc**. To let the women be simply pale imitations of their men-folk is wasting an opportunity. Amongst races that are naturally short lived, or in which male members regularly die in battle, the women are going to have to spend much of their time child-rearing. (I find it difficult to imagine the men of these races doing their share of the house-work, but failure of my imagination), but they should still have personality. Remember that their interests and objectives may not be identical with their men-folk; Many may actually be quite pleased that their men-folk fail to return from battle, or may help adventurers escape because they do not enjoy eating them. *"Humans are so difficult to cook- it's impossible to bring out the flavour..."*

♀ If we take **Grendel** as the archetypal **troll**, then Grendel's mother is the archetypal she-troll. Anyone familiar with **Beowulf** will be aware that she provided the hero with a far tougher battle than did her son; **AD&D** players could usefully take ideas from **Runequest**, where the she-trolls are seen as the brains and leaders of troll society. Of course, RQ trolls are very different and more complex creatures than the D&D killing machines, but then D&D players could learn some- thing from that, as well... If nothing else, the image of 'hen-pecked' trolls is worth thinking about! (See the cartoon film 'Gnomes')

♀ For some reason, many **spirits of nature** are portrayed in myth as female. For example Dryads, Naiads, Sylphs, Nymphs, Oreads, and Oceanids are all female. Much mythology shows these women as predatory. And why not? Most nature spirits are powerful and wayward, and should exhude an aura of seductive menace. But this does not mean that they should be one-dimensional pin-ups! Think about their natures, motives and wishes. A human (male or female) who has been stuck in the same glade or grotto for a few thousand years would by now be certifiably insane. Perhaps the nature spirit is mad. On the other hand, perhaps the spirit has no comprehension of time; she perceives only 'now'. Past and future are meaningless terms. Like elves, nature spirits should not necessarily be human in outlook. Even their interest in human males might have some other motive than might be expected; for example, the presence of a human might enable the spirit to maintain a physical form or experience the ecstatic flow of time. In turn, what effects does this have on the spirit? (A good opportunity for experimenting with schizophrenia!).

♀ **Medusae, Harpies and Lamia** appear to have one serious problem- how do they reproduce? Male equivalents are never seen. Various solutions exist: *Invent* male equivalents; assume they are somehow *magically* created; assume they are *interfertile* with a species that has males; or let them reproduce *asexually*. Take into account the effect that your solution will have on their numbers, though: If harpies can reproduce at will, why haven't they taken over the world? On the other hand, if Medusae mate with human men, why aren't they extinct? (What man would show any interest in a creature with asps on her head?)

In conclusion, whenever you build up a non-human society, don't forget the 'superior' sex!

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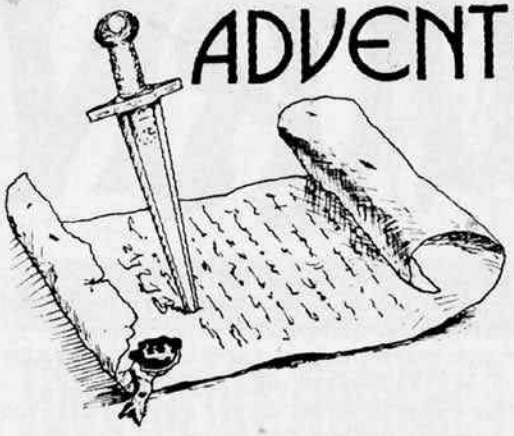

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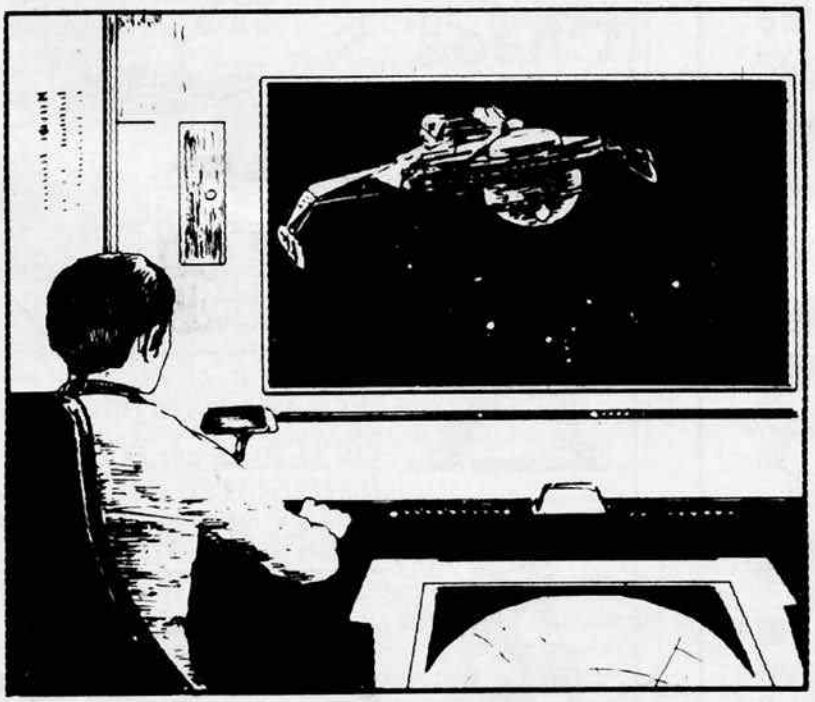

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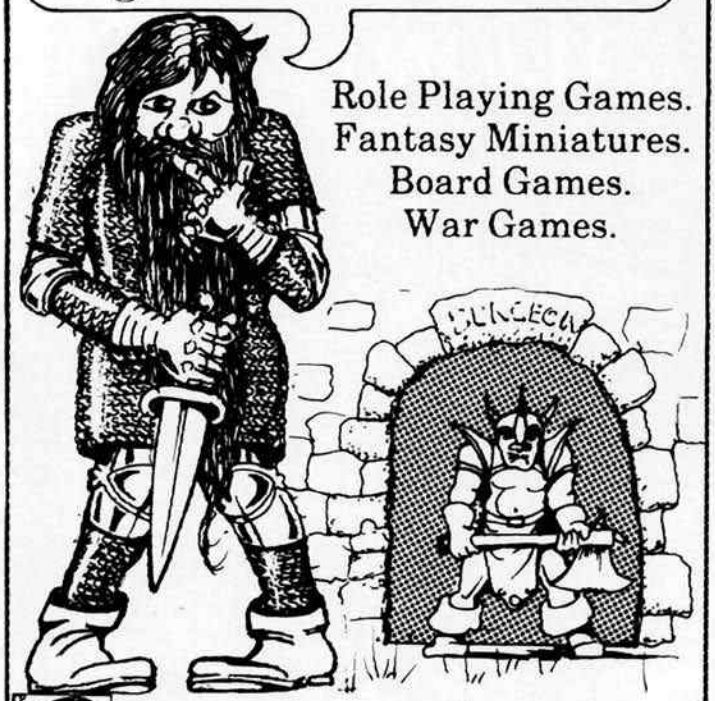

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SHOP WINDOW

Wilderness Survival Guide

BY T.S.R. FOR AD&D (£11.95)

In order to run a credible campaign, a Dungeon Master finds the need to research many varied facts concerned with the natural (and unnatural) world, often having to answer such questions as what does a cubic foot of water weigh, or how fast does food spoil? No book can completely alleviate the need to develop the odd interest in, say, geology or obscure tribal customs, but the *Wilderness Survival Guide* answers most of the questions likely to be asked when players venture in the wilds.

The book deals with the many aspects of outdoor adventuring, covering such indispensible topics as *Medicine* and *First Aid, Food* and *Water,* and *Natural Hazards* with comprehensive clarity. It details, for instance, in the section on camping, just how crumby a 'poor' shelter is, how little rain it actually keeps out and when it is likely to fall apart. It clarifies and extends the rules in areas such as *hunting* and *foraging* where previously there was little material to determine success or failure in such pursuits.

The **Wilderness Survival Guide** continues the process of introducing non-weapon proficiencies into AD&D. This process, begun in the **Oriental Adventures** book and continued in the **Dungeoneers Survival Guide,** provides characters with at least one adventure-related skill at first level with opportunities to acquire other skills, or improve the ones already possessed, at higher level. Wilderness proficiencies include Animal and Plant Lore, Survival, (of Heat, Cold or Desert) Mountaineering and Tracking.

These bonus abilities are balanced by previously unforseen difficulties and handicaps that players will have to cope with, such as the effects of sleeping in armour and the ease with which a fire can get out of hand!

A short and sensible section entitled *Starting from Scratch* should be read by anyone who is tempted to design a bit of topography, not only for the step by step method of creating a viable environment, but also for the lucid overview presented. It's not obvious why this section is reserved for the Dungeon Master's eyes only, as it is no more revealing of pertinent facts than the rest of the book. Players can gain or lose as much by reading the rest of the book that they **are** allowed to see; the 'loss' being the diminution of excitement and suspense that such knowledge causes. How many good players have become overcautious by reading the D.M.G.? Still, forbidden fruit is very tempting...

Weather is dealt with, as completely as anyone but the most niggling simulationist could wish. The system presented is eminently usable and covers (as do all the climatic bits) the tropics, the arctic, and everything in between.

Particularly useful are the tables dealing with encumbrance (for characters and animals), effects of wind on missile fire and waterborne vehicle characteristics, although all the tables should prove valuable sooner or later, including modifiers for thief's climbing rates, climbing for non-thieves, temperature effects and damage, reactions of animals and effects of lack of sleep, amongst others. Most of the tables are reprinted, thoughtfully, at the back of the book, where there are also three pages containing different sizes of hex, and permission is given to photocopy. (Unless you have free access to a photocopier this could prove expensive)

Another admirable **Jeff Easley** illustration graces the cover, the drawings inside range from very good to poor. Printing and production are, as usual, good; no typos or glaring gaps.

Kim Mohan has written a worthy companion volume to *Doug Niles' Dungeon Survival Guide*, especially considering that his subject is much broader.

Can an Urban Survival Guide be expected next? Or perhaps a Dungeon Master's Survival Guide, which could have an overall index, cross-referencing the vast amount of information now available in the ten (?) official rule books, and perhaps a table or two to roll on when the D.M. runs out of judgement and/or discretion.

ROBIN PARRY

The Watchers Of The Sacred Flame

BY INTEGRATED GAMES
PART 3 OF THE COMPLETE DUNGEONMASTER SERIES

Perhaps the most impressive feature of all the Endless Games/Beast Enterprises stable is the quantity of goodies you get when you open the box. **Sacred Flame** is no exception. It contains 3 books (scenario, scenes and characters), 12 sheets of floorplans, a GM screen with maps and random encounter tables, etc. and 5 player handout sheets.

At the heart of the game is the scenario, which continues from where parts 1 and 2 (**Halls of the Dwarven Kings** and **Lost shrine of Kasar-Khan**) left off, though it is playable on its own. It is a campaign scenario for use with AD&D, D&D or RQ rules, and so benefits more if used as part of the series.

Incidentally, it isn't necessary to play them in order as they build independant units of the whole campaign. Primarily written for 'serious' gamers, with time on their hands to assess the historical and political state of the surrounding lands- in this one, the party finds itself in search of the mystical Crystals of Power... without spoiling your enjoyment of the scenario, I will describe the other components forthwith;

The second Book contains all the NPCs required for the various sections of the adventure, including a formidible group of gypsies. These are of the 'Statistics only' variety, not normally the type I appreciate, but extremely useful as 'adventure fodder', and in keeping with the whole adventure - the emphasis is not on personality interaction, but on acting out the plot and fulfilling quests. It is rather reminiscent of the best of the Judges Guild scenarios, but with very nice illustrations and presentation. Those familiar with **Tortured Souls** or the now extinct **Gamesmaster** magazine should know what I mean.

The **Scenes** book contains several glossy illustrations of what the party can see, with possible clues and cues; a nice touch which is sadly lacking with most recent 'glossy' products.

The handouts also add to the feeling of 'being there'- they include hand-drawn maps and scratchings of letters to lead or mis-lead the players. I must admit that when I played, I was the one who clutched onto them as though they held the secret of life!

The floor plans are drawn specifically for this adventure, which saves a lot of time in cutting and building all the required dungeon shapes. They also serve as an excellent introduction to the **Endless Plans** system, one which I praise for their flexibility and usability. In this instance, they add to the convenience of play and the sense of 'being there'.

D.MICHAELS (Gametime Leisure)

Blood Bowl

BY GAMES WORKSHOP (£12.95)

Being a keen board games player and a patriotic lover of American Football, I was thrilled, to say the least, when I learnt of this game, a fantasy football game where two teams of the fantasy world's fittest must do combat on the field, and attempt to score 3 touch-downs to gain glory and blood!

Blood Bowl is (quote) *"based on the world of Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay and Battle Rules."* The box is well illustrated by **Brett Ewins**, with an 'Arnie Schwarzenegger look-alike' (actually an Ogre), wielding a Lesser Goblin under his arm, as he crashes through the mass of other players - Elves and the like.

The rulebook is equally attractive with illustrations by **Aly Morrison**, who also did the playing pieces and Gameboard. The six-piece jigsaw board is rather unusual in that it is about twice as long as it is wide (roughly 32" x 16"), which represents the playing field for any Halflings, Dwarves or Hob-goblins with the bottle to 'go out there and do it'. The gameboard lacks somewhat in character, a plain green/grass surface, with borders denoting starting positions for players, subs., etc. During play, however, I can assure you that this will soon run red, to add a little colour...

The game is designed for two players, who each represent the coach for their appointed team. Both players should select the team they wish to play - which can be of any race of beings listed in the rule-book. All members of his/her team must be of the same race, with the same initial abilities. Once you have selected your team you then fill in your **'Team Roster**, using pregen-erated statistics from the rulebook, and adding your **'Star Player Points'** as you do (a set amount of points you may award to one or more of the players in your team).

There are a couple of special teams available, one of which consists of 4 Ogres and 12 Lesser Goblins - hence the cover art on the box, confirming that an Ogre may throw a Lesser Goblin instead of and/or complete with ball, even if he is on the same team.

Your team - of which eleven only may be in play at any one time (the other four remain on the side line as subs), is represented by the familiar card characters with plastic mounts, as is the ball and referee (whom you toss to decide on who plays first).

Actions during play are what you would expect in American Football - movement, **throwing, kicking, tackling and attacking** (attacking not to be confused with tackling, as it is a pure attempt to maim or kill an opposing team member!). At the start of each team's turn, you may move any or all of your players, according to their **Movement Allowance** and position on field, possibly to attack or to defend against a charging assailant. In this case, extensive use is made of your abilitiy to **stay cool** under pressure, (though this characteristic doesn't apply to the severely restricted skeletons, who don't care too much about consequences).

It is also possible to aquire **Magic Items** to assist you in your game, though these are mainly to improve your chances of success in 'catching', 'throwing', etc.

The rulebook is humorously written in plain English, and a sequence of play is outlined at the back of the rulebook, along with resistance tables etc. Game designer **Jervis Johnson** talks of how this game has varied drastically by comparison to his initial design, which was much closer to American Football than in its present form. Other ideas have had to be dropped from the game due to the lack of room in the rulebook, which left me a bit disheartened. As the game is rather small in the components department, I would have thought GW could've afforded to extend the rulebook from 20 pages to 24, thus giving a bit more flexibility in the rules, perhaps introducing optional rules whereby strategy may be enhanced with 'dummy passes' and 'palming-off', etc. Having said that, I'm sure the supplements will follow...

Anyway, despite any bad points I may have made, this is a fun game and a must for sporting enthusiasts - that is of course if your idea of fun is a sport progressing somewhat from touch and run, to a cross between **Rollerball, Mean Machine** and **'Bedknobs & Broomsticks'** - and is presented in the slick, professional manner we've come to expect from Games Workshop

Experience points are awarded for successful use of skills during play, and a campaign and/or league could easily be constructed around this game with ample scope for postal games.

An expansion set is also due out soon (you never know, we might get an -other 4 pages yet - but at what price?).

D.MICHAELS (Gametime Leisure)

Lords Of Middle-Earth

VOLUME 1: THE IMMORTALS
PUBLISHED BY I.C.E. (£7.95)

*"Designed as a tool for GMs who wish to introduce major characters from **'The Hobbit'** or **'Lord of the Rings'** into their games".*

A 3-volume compendium, this first one deals with **Elves,** the **Maiar** and the **Valar,** and is Tolkien-based. Primarily for use with ICE's **MERP** or **Rolemaster** game system, a short chapter has been thoughtfully included to help convert the 'stats' to other systems. Each of these races is treated to a historical summary of the race from its beginnings in Eru's thoughts to the end of the Third Age and the beginning of the Age of Men. It ties together consistently and plainly the complex intricacies of **The Silmarillion** in a useable, referee - friendly manner. Following this is a brief section on the *nature* of the race - their society and material properties, their home and beliefs.

A character glossary follows, which details the 14 Valar, from Aulë through Melkor to Varda, with respective stats, personal biography and power /influen-ces. The 25 detailed Maiar, perhaps more colourful and useful in play to the GM, includes such notables as the Balrog of Moria, Tom Bombadil and Sauron himself. Among others of partic -ular interests are the 5 Istari (wizards), including Gandalf, and suggestions are given for using Istari in play.

The section on Elves details nearly 100 NPCs. I found this rather daunting, as to use as chance occurences or even as active non-player characters, there are too many to be employed with any effect in most campaigns; fine if your quest is set among the immortals Legolas, Celeborn, Luthien, Glorfindel, Gil-Galad or Galadriel (etc., etc.), but little use otherwise. I would have preferred rather less details on the elves, with possibly a few scenarios involving these major personalities.

Such is the greatness of the evils of Morgoth, Sauron and Ungoliant that they have a section devoted to them; "The Great Enemies", and great enemies they are, with a mere 1500 hits for the level 500 Morgoth. No begin -ner's expedition to tangle with any of these foes, but if the dizzy heights of terror has led to a feeling of nausea, the final chapters deal with the gene-ration and use of High level characters, to give back some semblance of bal -ance which Eru prescribed for Arda!

In all, a must for Middle Earth fanatics, but most of it is of no great use to GMs other than as a compen-dium of back- ground detail, most of which can be gleaned from Tolkien's own writings, and with the quality of existing ICE scenarios and supplements, this one is rather superfluous to most GMs.

STE DILLON

DL14: Dragons Of Triumph

BY T.S.R. FOR AD&D (£5.50)

This is the final, climatic module in TSR's *Dragonlance* series. The heroes of the lance reach the final battle with **Takhisis**, the dragon Queen of Darkness, where they must drive her back to her own plane, or face almost certain death.

The cover contains the now usual combined list of monster statistics. Also given are the character details for the two Dragonlance parties, which were split in DL6, and extra characters who have joined the parties since then. This does not mean that the module is run with sixteen characters, but that the players get to choose which characters out of the two groups, they want to use to face the Dark Queen.

The module is split into three sections, each a seperate booklet. Firstly, there is the **source book**, which gives background details about **Krynn**. There is a comprehensive timeline stretching from the beginning of the age of dreams, to the end of the war of the lance. Included are two maps of **Ansalon**, one showing the continent before the cataclysm, and another giving the distribution of creatures after the war. This second map can be used in conjunction with details about the continent, and about the factions left after the war, for planning further adventures in the land of Krynn.

Also given in the source book are combined descriptions of the creatures specific to Krynn, and of the most powerful magical items encountered by the characters during the modules.

The second booklet contains the maps needed to run the adventure. It is handy having the maps in a separate book, and not having to flick backwards and forwards, or having to consult a large map like that presented for the tower of the high clerist. Some of the maps, however, are printed so that the booklet has to be taken apart for them to be easily used. The maps are interspersed with rosters for the whitestone and dragon armies, for use with **Battlesystem**.

The main plot of the adventure is the attack of the chosen player characters on the Dark Queen's temple in **Neraka**. However, if Battlesystem is being used, full details are given to allow the rest of the characters to help lead the forces of the whitestone armies against the combined might of the white, green, black, blue and red Dragon armies.

As with the other Dragonlance modules, **Dragons of Triumph** can be played alone, but is better played as the final part of the Dragonlance saga. Alternatives as to how the Dark Queen can be defeated are given, so that each DM can choose which method fits his campaign best. This also gives DMs the chance to present any players who have read the books, with a different, and therefore more challenging adventure.

When DL1 was released, it showed a lot of promise as a truly epic series, which unfortunately, some of the latter adventure packs have not lived up to. DL14, however, was well worth waiting for. It brings the heroes' quests to a culmination in a final battle against time and the Dark Queen, which could give any party a real challenge.

JOHN S. DAVIES

'A Meeting at Godshome'

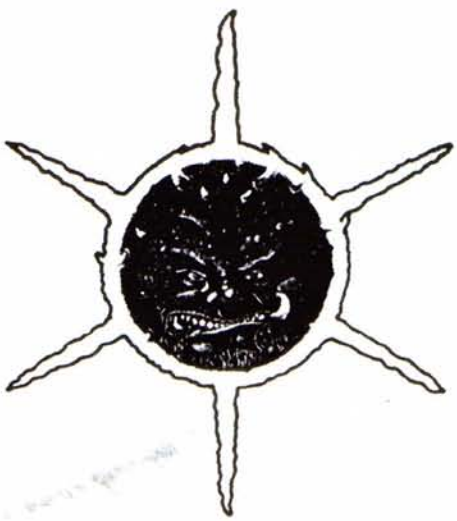
Warhammer Role-Play System

AT £14.95 - A GAMES WORKSHOP BARGAIN?

All the other major games manufacturing companies have their own fantasy rpg, so why not Games Workshop?

Given sufficient media attention in the pages of *White Dwarf* to make W.F.R.P. an instant 'Big Seller' to all those with the Warhammer Battles rules, I attempted to look at this independantly, as a set of FRP rules in their own right. This hardback book (costing a competitive **£14.95**) is very well presented, with some high quality B/W illustrations ((in general, one or two for each of the 365 + pages), mainly by *Tony Ackland*. The layout of the book itself appears to be well planned, thanks to the *Games Workshop Design Studio*, though the paper is of the same steady stable as the ***Paranoia*** Hardback book.

Following a brief narrative introducing **'The Old World'** (where W.F.R.P. is set), it is certainly aimed at the newcomer to both the world of fantasy and the world of FRP gaming. Character generation



however, is far more sophisticated than most FRPGs - basic characteristics total 14, as opposed to the normal 6 or 7, extended to include Personality characteristics such as leadership and fellowship; characters can be Human, Elf, Dwarf or Halfling, with appropriate modifiers to the basic statistic; a brief, race history and special racial abilities, languages, etc. It all sounds very familiar to me...

Next, there's alignment (ho, hum!) and Fate - which is the saving factor, to prevent beginning PCs from being Dead-ed, represented by a number of *'Fate Points'*.

Next on the agenda is *'Career Class'* (Character class if you will) - covering Warriors, Rangers, Rogues and Academics, each with their own restrictions and skills, which are cross-referenced with the character's race - so an Elf Ranger has a better chance of being 'Flat Footed' than any

other race of Ranger, or any other career class of Elf. By the way, the number of skills a PC can possess is dependant upon his age (modified again for race). Told you it was a complex system, but the abundance of tables helps to clarify matters. Wait a minute! More tables, this time to state the actual *Career* your adventurer has followed - hence a 'Rogue' can be anything, from an agitator to a grave robber! These 63 careers are detailed in full, with additional skills, bonuses, working background, etc.

133 skills follow next, each briefly detailed so that your players know exactly what 'astronomy' is, or 'begging', 'bribery', or even 'brewing', and their applications in game terms.

The next section is the GM's information, which includes the heart of the game- the percentile game mechanics a la Runequest/Chaosium games. This isgood because there are no success/ failure tables to look up; the roll is always assessed against the PC's relevant characteristics, often with a modifier.

The shortcoming, however (and it is a big one,) is that the GM will often have to improvise a 'Test' to decide whether or not the PC succeeds. Standard tests are detailed in a table, to give you an idea. For example, a character attempts to 'bargain'; this will be tested against his **'Fellowship'** characteristic. At the GM's discretion (again), the test can be modified by his **Charm, Haggle** and/or **Seduction** skills. 36 such tests are mentioned, but my concern is the amount of 'Haggling' this system will cause between GMs and players. After all, there are two types of GM: Those who adhere strictly to the **book** (this test procedure will give him problems); and those who **improvise** in play (who don't really need this test procedure). To modify or not to modify; **that** is the question!

The rest of the game mechanics are detailed next, including **Moving, Light and Darkness, Buildings, Traps, Fire, Poison, Disease and Insanity (?), Alignment** (Law, Good, Neutral, Evil, Chaos), and **Experience** (exp points and learning, etc.)

Advanced Careers are available, for when your PCs have 'graduated', and introduces new skills, bonuses etc.

Combat consists of initiative and surprise, hand-to-hand combat, the effects of weapons and armour, the effects of damage, mounted and missile combat, and recovery.

A % base hit location is provided, similar to that of the Chaosium Hit Location Chart, and armour is available to protect those parts. Modifiers are given for weapons & tactics, and additional damage is done by critical hits and the like. A very descriptive table explicitly details the implications of a critical hit on each body location. A blow to the head, for example, can vary in effect from a glancing stun to decapitation! The chart makes good reading the first time around, but all that is needed is to know the effect in play, making the graphic descriptions rather superfluous.

Magic is available to spell casters, of which there are two types - *magicians* and *priests*, though other characters may acquire temporary magical powers via a blessing. Mainly though, magic is restricted to *wizards, demonologists, elementalists, illusionists, necromancers, alchemists, clerics* and *druidic priests.* These spell casters are graded in levels from 1 to 4, which effectively limits the spells at their command.

Spells are cast, by temporarily expend -ing Magic Points (a la Runequest *Power* points), which in turn are restricted to a maximum for the Power level of the caster

Some spells can be resisted (test for **willpower**), some can not, nor can the physical effects of the spell, such as rain or fire, though the spell caster can reduce this resistance by expending more magic points. Victims can similarly increase their resistance.

Spells are split into two types - *PettyMagic*, which are low impact, easily acquired/cast - including magic lights, flames, locks etc. *Battle Magic* spells are rather more potent. Next along the line are demonologist's spells- *summoning, bargaining, dispelling & binding*, and number 18 spells. Elemental spells total 32, and Illusionist spells only 19. Necromantic spells count 18 and Druidic Priests' only 14.

Next comes the **magic items** from the 'all-seeing mirror' to magic weapons, wands, scrolls and potions.

Religion and Belief details the deities of the *Old World*; Temples and Shrines, Prayers & Blessings. 20 Deities are covered, including human and non-human, good and evil.

This section is rather like a mini **'Cults of Prax'** really. The Bestiary contains lists of humanoid, animal, undead, and demonic creatures from the Chaos Beastman to the Warrior of Chaos, from the jelly-like amoeba to the centauroid ZOAT. Illustrations and descriptions rely heavily on *Citadel miniatures*' impressions of these foes, which makes good commercial sense, but detracts from the 'newness' of it all.

Section 7 is the **'World Guide'** and is the chronology, timeline and history of the 'Old World', its culture and its races, from the encroachment of chaos to the development of the Elves, etc.

Following this is a fairly substantial scenario/adventure set in the 'Old World' to introduce the GM and players to the system and the society.

It seems as though Games Workshop have 'pulled it off' with this one; though little in it is new, its sources lie in the many role-playing games which have gone before. It draws heavily on the Runequest flavour for realism and 'togetherness', with some of the traditional aspects of fantasy which made AD&D; character class, experience points system, rewards & punishments, etc. Though not as vast as the AD&D manuals, the book could easily have been split up into two or more parts. As it stands, it includes everything from character generation to the first adventure, with some simple building layouts thrown in. Very well put together and presented.

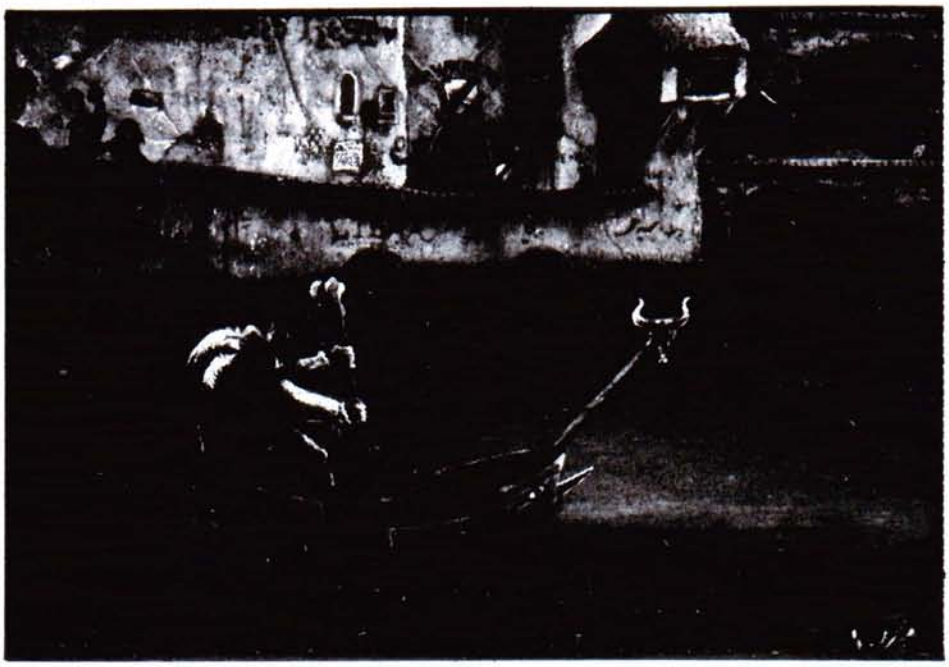
As I've said though, there's nothing new in it. Sure, it's destined to be a big seller, and it certainly is good value for money, providing you **want** a new system. Of course, because it's a very 'together' and 'complete' sourcebook, it's also likely that having boughtou'll then want to subscribe to *White Dwarf*, if only for the odd page or so of *Warhammer*, or pay the full price for the forthcoming **deluge** of scenarios and supplements. I know it's cynical of me, but GW appear as though they want 'steer the market' with this one. As it stands, great. Good value for money. However, if you will then feel compelled to 'collect the set' as it were, then I'd seriously think about it. Just sit back and count up how many AD&D modules there are. And how much **they** cost you.

To quote, *"Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay will be supported by a series ofcampaign aids and supplements, and is destined to become a major force in the hobby/games industry."*

Games Workshop Limited.

REVIEWED BY STE DILLON

'Punting In The Old World Of Warhammer"



BATTLETECH

Review

By Ashley Watkins

Battletech 2nd Edition

Boxed set includes 43 page rulebook, 2 maps, 48 card mechs, 24 plastic stands, 120 counters and 2D6 dice. RRP £14.95.

Citytech

Boxed set includes a 44 page rulebook, 2 city maps, 24 card mechs, 12 plastic stands, 48 vechicle counters, 24 infantry counters, 160 building counters and 2D6 dice. RRP £14.95.

Aerotech

Boxed set incudes a 40 page rulebook, a space map, 100+ counters and 2D6 dice. RRP £11.95.

Friends, wargamers and Japanese Meka fans, please take the time to read this review and remember that though I will express some reservations, I recommend the game to you. The genre of giant fighting war machines that look like robots but aren't, is rather new in this country. The Japanese have made many animated series that exploit the theme, but the only time we get such series is after they have been butchered by the TV people who think that animation means kiddy shows. For instance the programme *'Battle of the Planets'* was known as *'Space Ninja Team Gatcha man'* in Japan. Not only that, it was also a serial in which one of the main characters was killed; all the bits about lovesick robots were added when the programme was translated. Such is the fate that most Japanese animation meets.

The Japanese have a strong tradition of producing adult animation, which they call *'anima'*. One of the most influential anima produced in the last ten years was a series entitled *'Super Dimension Fortress Macross'*. There were two sequels, *'Super Dimension Century Orguss'* and *'Super Dimension Cavalry Southern Cross'*. Another series too had its design roots firmly based on the Macross Saga, this was *'Genesis Climber Mospeada.* The reason I give all this preamble is that a company called **'Harmony Gold'** decided it was about time that someone did a decent translation of a Japanese anima.

For lots of technical and financial reasons, they joined Macross, Southern Cross and Mospeada into one continuous narrative. They also tied in with the Revell plastic kit company, who had the licence to produce the models, to present 'Robotech'. Notice any similarities to FASA's Battletech title? Before reviewing Battletech I must tell you a bit more about the eighty-five episode Robotech series, which is divided into three parts.

Part one is the **Macross Saga**, which deals with the recovery of a crashed alien starship. This event helps to stop WWIII, since we earthlings cotton on to the fact that there is someone out there, and they might not be all that friendly. The ship holds many secrets and surprises for its new owners, one of which is Robotechnology. This creates the means to produce transforming fighting machines, which can change from aircraft into walking meka, including a hybrid flying/walking mode. These Valkyrie variable fighters become the mainstay of Earth's defences when the alien **Zentraedi** turns up. They have found out about the crash landing of the starship and they want it too.

Part two is called **Robotech Master** and takes place twenty-five years after the crash. These 'guys' are the real owners of the ship and they want it back, since it had on board the only Protoculture factory in existence. As their whole society is based on Protoculture energy cells, you will realise that they are in a mean mood. All does not end well.

Part three is **New Generation.** It seems that there has been a galactic war of sorts. The Robotech Masters have a mortal foe called the **Invid**. Rather than fight the Invid themselves they created a police force to do the job for them, who become known as the Zentraedi. These, however revolted against their creators because they thought that they were second to none. All three fight each other. One snag; the Invid, who are real scumbag alien types, like to eat Protoculture cells - three times a day plus supper if they can. As the Protoculture factory burst all over the earth at the end of part two, our planet has become the equivalent of an interstellar fast food joint. Earth has become very popular with the Invid. **New Generation** deals with consequences of being the only takeaway in the galaxy.

The quality of **Robotech** is excellent. Characters develop, get married, have children and die, and you believe in them as real people. To cut a long story short, the programme has achieved fave raves and has become an outstanding success in the States, where the second series will soon be showing.

Battletech is a revised vesion of **Battledroids**. As can be expected of a product from **FASA** the producion quality is high, and you get value for your money. Sharp eyed readers will get great pleasure from noting the various indirect references to Robotech, from which the game takes its inspiration. The rules are presented in four parts, which are as follows:

1) **Battlemech training** introduces the players to the game sequence which is split into initiative, movement, overheating and combat. You can have your mech walking, running, jumping, or just standing around whilst being shot at. You can only shoot if you have a clear line of sight to the target.

2) **Advanced gunnery** has a reaction phase added to the game sequence, to allow you to turn the mech's torso to face an opponent. There are extra pilot skill rolls to make during movement. When firing you can damage the interior of the opposing mech, shoot over or through obstructions and even fire at more than one target. Your mech can also lie prone. Critical hits are possible, and you can kill the enemy mech pilot, and take aimed shots at mechs that have shut down due to overheating. Fun!

3) **Expert Battlelance** adds another phase to the game sequence, physical attack. Now you can punch and kick the enemy mech or for that matter charge at it. For the sadistic player comes the chance to jump up and down on the opponent, which can be really satisfying if you are bigger than him. A comprehensive pilot skill roll list completes the movement and you get more chances to fall down, a hilarious event when it happens to somebody else.

Finally there are the **optional rules** which allow you to use the limb you have just ripped off a mech as a club to beat it with. Or to indulge in a little pyromania and overheat the enemy mechs. In addition you can have pilots with different skill levels and get to improve them through combat. Plus you get rules to make up your own mech designs, just in case none of the fourteen pre-generated mechs take your fancy.

Citytech is expert Battletech and shares the good production qualities of its sister game. The rules have been reordered into one part and some bits have been modified.

The game sequence no longer has the reaction phase, where you can turn the mech's torso to face an opponent. Rules are included for fighting in a city and you get to walk all over itsy-bitsy vehicles, and there is even more jollity from jumping or falling on infantry. Tee hee. There are rules covering the construction of vehicles and some more optional rules covering things like hidden movement, falling into basements, being shot at by gun emplacements and so on.

Aerotech is to all intents and purposes, a separate game. As such I will only mention those parts which bear directly on Battletech. There are rules for landing on the battlefield and for fighters to strafe or dive bomb mechs. Ground mechs get to fire back at fighters which are strafing them or dropping inferno bombs on them. Fighters can engage in dogfights over the battlefield and more importantly you get get the chance to use

variable fighters a la Robotech. The simple mech landing from orbit rules are also useful.

The game flows very well; the group of players on whom I tried out Battletech enjoyed the game and have expressed an interest in a mini campaign. The way everything is set out engenders a sense of personal involvement with what is going on, and you get a feel for the problems facing you that is not anonymous number juggling. There are certainly role playing aspects to Battletech, aside from the obvious Mechwarrior rpg supplement link. Battletech is a game that will build a bridge between those who play exclusively either rpg or wargames and this can only be for the better.

There are however, a few flaws or hiccups in Battletech. Although the production values are high there are a lot of typos, especially in the quick reference sheet, which can be a real nuisance when playing. The vehicle reference forms are not good combat stats sheets because they have far too much irrelevant information on them for use during a game. The hex scale to stacking limit is frankly stupid: as each hex represents an area thirty metres across - I can't see why two mechs couldn't occupy the same one. But, saying this, one must take into consideration play-ability, and the stacking as it stands is more playable with the pieces provided. Infantry get short shrift and are just so much mech fodder.

Two other points. The reaction phase has been taken out of the Citytech game and at first glance this seems odd. Actually, it makes a lot of sense after you've played a game. I suspect that this reaction turn of the torso came about after a review of **Battledroids** by the **Space Gamer** magazine, where it was suggested that this would allow a slow mech to turn its weaker rear armour away from the attacking mech and be both fairer or more realistic. However, when playing Battletech, this sort of circumstance hardly ever occurs, and when it does it is easy enough to state which way the mech is facing. The only time that the direction the torso is facing becomes critical is when two or more mechs surround another, and again a reaction phase is not needed, just a statement as to which way the mech is facing.

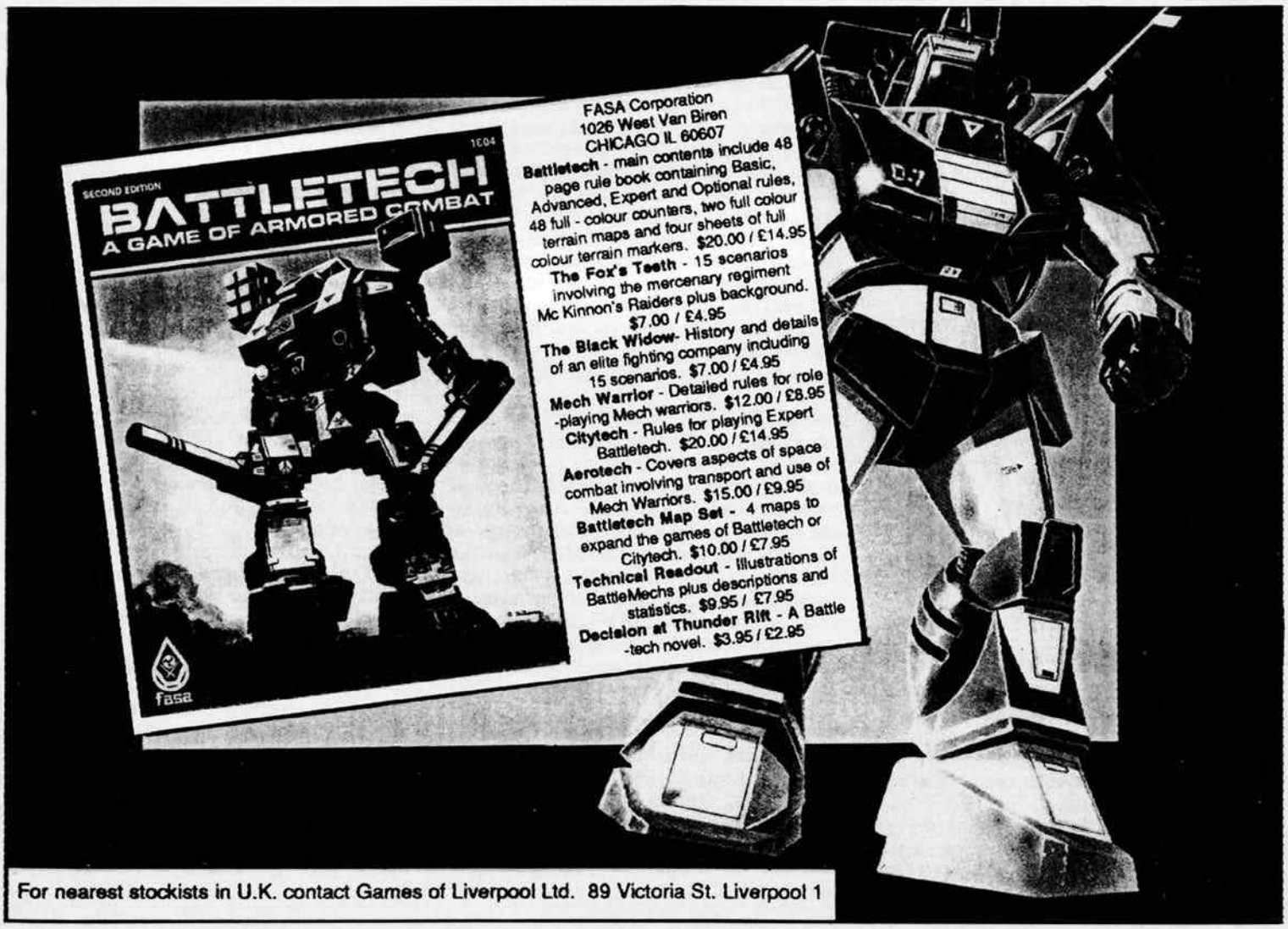
The other point that came across whilst playing Battletech is what a good miniature game it would make. It has that miniatures feel to it, and to be honest, some of the rules that are provided are of the type that would be important if played on the table top. This opinion is reinforced when you find out that **Ral-Partha** make Battletech miniatures, and I think the game would benefit from the visual aspects if played this way.

It should be apparent that I have enjoyed playing these games, but I have some reservations about them. The Battletech training part of Battletech is not worth playing, as the game only really takes off when you start playing Expert Battlelance. Citytech is therefore a far better buy than Battletech since it is the expert game, and has the advantage of being well-ordered. Battletech's rule layout can have you flicking back and forth to check a rule. Citytech also gives the rules for infantry and vehicles, but not the rules on designing your own mechs.

Aerotech is a misnomer; this game should be called Spacetech, and should you want to have the full rules for engaging in aerial combat, then you will need Top Gun!? Yes, a good question. Top Gun is FASAs game that ties in with the film of the same name, and it includes rules for aerial combat that are compatible with Battletech. However, if you want to use variable geometry mechs in your game you will need Aerotech.

I have mixed feelings about the way FASA have marketed Battletech, and consider the presentation of the game in three sets as a blatant milking of people's finances. Rules that you may well want to use together are split into discrete parts in different sets, and inevitably you will end up with a lot of duplicated material.

However, Battletech has real science fiction flavour, and it's not often that the elements of playability and background come together in an SF game. So get Citytech for the combat rules, Battletech you want to design your own mechs, Aerotech only if you want the variable geometry mechs, or want to play the space game. This game could well become a cult classic and I highly recommend that you give it a look.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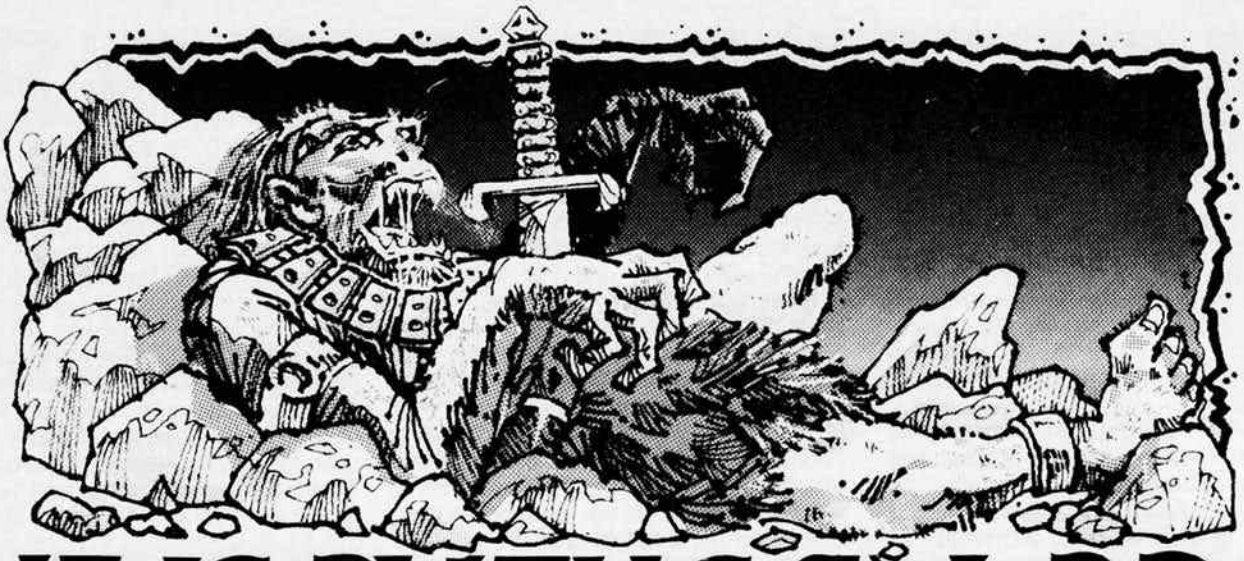


LIVE BY THE SWORD

READERS' LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please address all letters to: LIVE BY THE SWORD, ADVENTURER, 85 Victoria Street, Liverpool L1 6DG.

JAMES OSBORNE, Essex: Would it be right in assuming the absence of *Boris the Bold* on the cover of **Adventurer** #6, was not purely to allow a celebrity (Saint Nicholas) to make a personal appearance, and that it might be a result of some foul play - by a furious *'Jennifer Jackson'* having not received a free T-shirt for her size 36 bod (LBTS #5.)

Or is it possible that Boris himself was being fitted for one over the Christmas period.

▼

MARTIN HARROW, Wirral: Okay, the little man on the horse **(You mean Boris? -ed.)**. Santa has put him in his bag hasn't he?

▼

A.J. BRADBURY, Sussex: Kevin Hassal's (LBTS #4) comments on the existence of evil, etc. in the CoC rulebook must surely be a wind-up. After reading his letter, it took less than five minutes to find the following statements:

On **Shudde M'ell**; "...the most evil of his kind..."

On **Y'golonac**; "He... (accosts) the especially perverted and subtly evil..."

On **Shubb-Niggurath**; "Many diabolical cults...may worship this being..."

On the **Shoggoths**; "...the demonic Shoggoths..."

On the **Hounds of Tindalos**; "All the evil of the universe was concentrated in their lean, hungry bodies..."

Nothing 'evil' about the gods and creatures of the mythos and their followers? Pull the other one, Mr. Hassal- it's got tentacles on!

▼

JOHN X, Cromer: I suggest (Kevin Hassal) looks through the Cthulhu rulebook again- A quote from Lovecraft at the end of the Cthulhu Mythos chapter states;-

"They shall soon rule where man rules now... they cause madness and death... are unutterably evil".

Yes, evil is indeed relative, but surely from man's viewpoint. If your arguments about the Aztecs hold true, then it can be used to justify any crime. After all, the Nazis had a 'custom' of slaughtering innocent people- over 6 million of them! Not all of the mythos creatures are active against humanity, and the rule book tells us that the Cthonians are not so motivated, so the example given by Mr. Hasal is silly. Those creatures most active against humanity are often unable to act in person, and instead are forced to use humans to further their aims, which is where the cults come in, and hence the investigators.

▼

NEIL GRANT, Mid-Glam: In response to Kevin Hassal's letter, the deities of the Cthulhu mythos are not so much **evil** as totally **amoral**. They simply don't care if humanity gets in the way. However, many of their followers commit actions (such as murder) that are BY NORMAL STANDARDS evil. Incidentally, Cthonians probably couldn't wipe out humanity at all, let alone easily. While they could easily destroy all major cities, decimating the population, taking out each individual community with an earthquake is less practical.

Another informative reply from the renegade halfling wizard's academy. Thank you, Neil.

More and more letters have been arriving to let me know exactly what games you want to see covered in Adventurer. With sales of over 30,000 per issue, though, I'm sure you're not *all* writing... yet.

▼

KIEREN DIMENT, Amersham: How about some articles telling us about minority games and what they are like (a la "Systems Check" in Sound & Fury); basically reviews of old or unpopular games.

Most of the letters I receive are from people wanting to see the *latest* games reviewed and often accuse us of being 'out of date', so your suggestion is a relatively new one to me, Kieren.

▼

AIDAN HARVEY, Leeds: How is it that Rich Crawley (LBTS #6) got to comment on Adventurer? He states in his letter that he has 'found the rules system' to his tastes. Does that also mean that he has all the scenarios he ever wants to play, or has he by chance come up with the ultimate rules system/ scenario that will give both players and GMs maximum pleasure time and time again with no need to play anything else? Pardon me, but isn't it a little bit *boring* to be content with the one rules system?

What I understand him to mean is that he is a D&D/AD&D fanatic with no intention of playing any other rules system. I prefer to collect rules systems and adapt them, cannibalising them to come up with a coherent, consistent gel which, although complete, is by no means resistant to change. To clarify, if I come across a new idea in a scenario/rules set which I can use, I gleefully 'poach' it for my own campaign.

▼

CRAIG JUDY, York PA, USA: I have enjoyed your articles & scenarios on games that I have no idea how to play (the

Stormbringer scenario in issue #3 made very interesting reading and I used the plot line to imagine a story of my own), and I have no desire to see these disappear.

▼

!SECURITY OVER-RIDE!
:MESSAGE FROM SECTOR STN.

It has recently come to our attention that Adventurer has obviously forgotten to print essential and informative supplements for PARANOIA. Our great, omnipotent and omnipresent Computer, in its infinite wisdom, has sent several packages to STEPHEN-R-DLN-6. Failure to print these various items in future issues of your 'magazine' on a regular basis will result in the immediate summary execution of said Stephen-R-Dln-6.

Message received from Paul-U-Stn-3 (Hants Sector)

▼

C.A. KAMPANAOS, Lytham St. Annes: Thank you for a mention of Chivalry & Sorcery in issue #4, something which has been waiting since White Dwarf #19 in the early '80s. Has this excellent system been doomed to anonymity, or is it that it is too complicated for mainstream gamers who would rather not get involved in game mechanics?

▼

KIEREN DIMENT: Could we have an article on LARP (Live action role playing). From the information I have so far, it seems to me that LARPers are a bunch of people going around a 'zoo dungeon', monster bashing. Or, instead of one of the pages of Voyages Beyond, how about some reviews of comics? They are becoming more and more related to rolegames, eg. Judge Dredd, TMNT and ALL the superhero games. Talking of comics, are you the same... **(No I am not!- ed.)**

▼

PHIL RADLEY, Essex: I've just received #5 and surprise, surprise! There's no Science Fiction- ignoring 'Voyages Beyond' Are you going to tell me that there are no SF games? Or that no-one has contributed SF in the 12 months you've been in business? Don't you think D&D is a bit 'old hat'?

That is positively the last letter we're going to print on the lack of SF, because we've done it now. Two Paranoias and a generic SF scenario should see all you 3rd. rate SF buffs okay for a couple of years. Perhaps we'll even have another one in our centenary issue! Okay, I'm only joking. Now, about our vampire issue:

▼

JAMES WIGHT, Bristol: AArgghh! Help, the vampires are coming, what are we going to do? Let's show them "Once Bitten" or "Whiplash" or "Bomber" or even read them some horror fiction by Brian Lumley!

MARK RYAN, Hants: Come on now; do you really think the subject of vampires has to be covered in yet another magazine? First it was White Dwarf (37), Imagine (22) and now Adventurer (4). Basically, I think the deadly duo of the werewolf and vampire have had more than enough background, and today's fantasy magazines should be turning to the development of material on other classic, but neglected monsters (ie: the Goblinoid type creatures, etc).

▼

KIERAN O'SULLIVAN, Chelmsford: Now come on-- vampires are powerful creatures, but you don't need to devote a whole magazine to the subject. The D&D adventure was about vampires, Shop Window had 2 out of 5 reviews devoted to vampires, a six-page story by the world's greatest authority in ichthology, and 4 pages on Children of The Night. It's vampire madness! Why don't you rename the magazine '**vampires anonymous**'! (in heavy print please)

Odd... I thought the idea of a special theme issue was to include as many articles as you could on that theme. Obviously you disagree, Kieran.

▼

NEIL GRANT, Mid-Glam: In your article 'Metamorphosis & Lycanthropy' (ADV #5), the idea of using variable-density to explain how a shapechanger can lose most of its size runs into one problem: under this theory, a man might be able to attain the SIZE of a bat, but his WEIGHT would be unaffected, and who needs a twelve stone bat? A better idea lies in the equation $E=MC^2$.The excess mass could be shed as heat in the transformation. To return to human size, the shapeshifter draws heat from the environment, creating a local "cold spot" of the type commonly associated with ghosts. Incidentally, I believe that this idea was used (on a much larger scale) in the Dr. Who story "The Dæmons".

▼

JAMES WIGHT, Bristol: Dave Morris (LBTS #5) has a valid point, but a rather impractical one. There are a good many gamers who find history a boring subject, and so would find in-depth articles on medieval society no better. Most of the scenarios I've seen during 5 years of gaming haven't been too bad as far as realism is concerned. Anyway, even if some scenarios don't exactly resemble the society of the middle ages, then so what? This is fantasy, after all, and I think realism can be forgotten and emphasis put on the fantastic aspects of a scenario.

As regards books, **K. Allen Brown** is one of the best when it comes to castles, providing many useful examples and many useful designs.

▼

L. TURNER, Orpington: Re: Dave Morris (LBTS #5)- I think any player or GM who studied such a subject would add more depth and realism to their campaigns. I myself shall check out some of the books mentioned and would welcome articles on such material with open arms.

▼

NEIL GRANT: In answer to Dave Morris' suggestion that you run background articles on the medieval period, has it occurred to him that a) very few RPGs apart from D&D and C&S are set in the Middle Ages and b) that the existence of real magic would mean that an originally medieval society would quickly be changed almost beyond recognition. Imagine the effect of a "Rock to Mud" spell on a medieval castle wall, and you should see what I mean. However, I think that the idea of discursive articles examining the role of things like trade, money, transport etc. in a fantasy world would be very worthwhile.

The only thing wrong here, Neil, is that just as the presence of magic spells can alter the physical properties of a society, such as brick walls, etc., it can also effect the religious and social structure of the society, making it subject to change and adaptations far removed from the 'real' medieval society. With a high presence of curses and healing spells, for example, surely illnesses and diseases would be bought and sold, rather than a random distribution throughout the whole class structure. Similarly, as all role-players should know, transport cannot possibly draw too heavily on medieval days, for in gaming, it has been much embellished with the presence of magic and intelligent beasts to push, pull, teleport or fly man and his vehicles.

▼

TOM ZUNDER, Sheffield: I was sorry to see the criticisms of the reviews in #4, since reviewing is always a two-edged problem; one hand wanting to describe everything, the other not wanting to give too much away. I hope the majority of your readers understand this.

Perhaps this next letter will alleviate some of your worries, Tom. Personally, I think we have struck a fine balance for this 'two-edged problem'- subjective criticism of how well a game plays, backed up by a description of the contents, though without 'giving the game away'.

▼

ANDREW SZLOSAREK, London: I appreciate good value for money, so when I saw 'Shop Window' and read the reviews, I was impressed. Normally there are only a few short sentences in some magazines, explaining how a game works, but your reviews were very detailed. This helped me decide which one to go for.

'WHAT IS PLAY BY MAIL?'

On the 7/2/87 the most important event in the P.B.M. calendar will be taking place at the **Porchester Center, Queensway, London, W2**. between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. The Second British P.B.M. Conference is upon us and almost anybody who is somebody will be attending. For £1.50, you can come and scrutinize at least 25 of the most major P.B.M. games, examine their rulebooks, and pick up many discounts when purchasing your initial start-up package!! You will also be able to come along and chat to the players of over 75 different games, get to know what they think and their favourites.

You can participate in the AD&D open competition, organised and run by **The Freedom Warriors,** a well known and well respected RPG club based in East London, to see if you can pit your skills against the other entrants and pick up one of the trophies that are up for grabs!!

You can watch a LARP club donning their armour and fighting it out on stage. Furthermore, you can have a chat to them at their large stall.

If all this sounds like too much hard work, you could always go shopping!! There will be a large stall stocked will fantasy figures, board games, scenarios, rulebooks, paints etc. run by **Games People Play.** There is also a leading software company offering a full range of their computer games, a heavy metal record stall as well, and a well known publisher selling comics and books.

All this and a licensed bar with hot food available!! I will be chairing the meeting and I am interested in meeting all Adventurer readers who turn up.

On with the rest of the column:-

1. **'World of Chaos'**, run by :- **G.A.D.Games,** Marland, Ploughill, Nr Bude, Cornwall, Ex 23 9E1.

This is a D&D single-character fantasy P.B.M. game. You can create a *Wizard, Thief* or *Warrior* type character by allocating your initial 16 points to either of the following characteristics; *Combat, magical ability, heath* and *agility*. Once you have added a detailed description of your character's background, beliefs and personality, you set off out for the big wide world to become an adventurer. Start-up is only **£1.50** and the turns are an even more reasonable 55 pennies!!

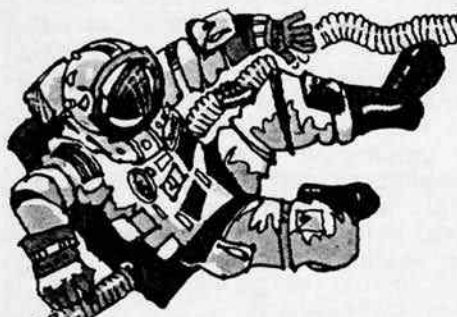
However, **'Adventurer'** readers have a chance to get their grubby little maulers around a free copy of the **'World of Chaos'** rulebook. The first five readers who write in and correctly state the full name of the legendary King Arthur's most famous knight will be sent the rulebooks gratis!!! So get cracking.

2. Lets move up-market somewhat now to a game that is one of the most expensive around. **'Muskets And Mules'** is a P.B.M. game that enables you to take over one of the major countries that were involved in the **Napoleonic** wars in North central Europe between the years 1805 and 1809. In essence this game is a over-the-table wargame played by post, and if wargaming is your thing then this game is for you. Although pricey, it s immense value for money. The rule book alone is one of the best I have ever seen, and it tackles a complicated subject with great ease and clarity. The overwhelming feeling of *involvement* jumps out of the rulebook and grabs you by the throat. There is an atmosphere in the game which is realistic and quite moving. A great deal of research has gone into this game from: **Historical Engineering**, The Stable, The Temple, Great Wilbraham, Cambridge. CB1 5JF

Start up costs **£7.00** and further turns, which have set deadlines of 14 or 21 days can range from **£11.00** to **£14.00** per turn, dependant on which army you are allocated. A game for ardent wargamers but not for novices.

Further information on the P.B.M. conference (advance tickets at £1.25, cheques payable to 'The second P.B.M. Conference), or any P.B.M. games, news or tips you may wish me to print in Adventurer, write to me at:-
59 Klin Court, Newell Street, Poplar, London. E14 7JP.

By Wayne Bootleg.



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HERNE BAY: The Guild Of Melee + Magic meets every Thursday, 7:30 pm- 10:30 at the Druids Head, Bank St., Herne Bay. Any games played. Age 12+ Admission 50p.

South Coast Area Role-Players' Association. Games Meets at Regular Intervals. Details: Michael Jacobs, Bognor Regis (0243) 823006. Also - Bimonthly SCARPA newsletter, as advertised.

Dragons on the Hill (4) - Role Playing in South London. We play anything. Meeting on wednesday nights in New Cross (SE14) Phone 732 - 7092 for details.

The Farnham Wargames Club - meets every sunday at 2-7pm (ish) at players' homes so no fee. Average age is 18, but all ages & M/F welcome. We play mostly board/wargames, but anything is possible. Contact Alan Grimes on (0252) 711076. 25 Penfold Croft, Farnham, Surrey.

WEYMOUTH: Wanted; players and GMs (16+) for any RPGs - with view to starting regular Adul club/group.I can GM Bushido, Traveller, GH, RQ Car Wars, CoC and more. Please contact in writing or in person:- Jon Freeman, 3 Coppice Court, Broadwey, Weymouth, Dorset DT3 5SA.

NEW CLUB - LONDON/ESSEX AREA; Auto Duelists to form AADA Chapter; Mental age 17+ (either sex); Contact Phil - Ingrebourne 43255.

FANZINES FOREVER...?

by Ben Goodale & Alex Bardy

A few first issues to mention before moving on: The first is **Critical Hit** which has become what's termed 'reborn'. Two issues appeared before this but this issue is the result of the contributors revolting against the previous editors! Anyway, it's a mixed bag of badly presented, but well written articles (save perhaps the computer bits,) which could do well given more support...

The other new zine is **Citizen of Grenada** which is both nicely presented and well written. The *Toon* scenario deserves credit, how many other games give you the opportunity to purchase a live *Star Spawn of Cthulhu*? Apart from the piece on jazz, this zine is very readable, try a copy today...

Established Zines:

The first is **Telegraph Road**, a name you must be sick of seeing within these pages. This is simply because it's almost impossible to cover a topic without it! 'Terri' has been going for more than 21 issues now and centres around the development of **Galadra** (the ultimate RPG,) with postal games and christianity thrown in. If it's PBMs you want, then this is probably the best time to get a copy, since quite a few are now starting. Overall, a good read and one of the best fanzines around.

The Zadragorzette is another fanzine which has been around a long time, its odd numbering system makes it hard to tell how long! Zad concerns itself mainly with a PBM fantasy campaign, but there are also game and book reviews, and a variety of quite useful gaming articles. A nice, if rather short read, which is perhaps a little pricey for its size.

Imazine is another 'Old Timer', which was once based around two lettercols, with a few real gaming articles; it's now changed direction and goes some way towards printing scenarios for the minor systems *(Dr. Who* and *Dragon Warriors)*, and discursive articles on such topics as campaigns, gaming style, and on writing articles! There's also an emphasis placed upon game reviews and news. A nice, well-presented zine which some believe to be 'leading' the hobby at the moment...

Another 'aged' zine is **Superhero UK,** and if you play SHRPGs, it's almost indispensible! Issue #4 contains a lot of useful material such as Secrecy Ratings, a scenario, and a very sneaky article entitled 'wipe out', which suggests introducing a NPC to the party as an old comrade who, unfortunately, the players don't remember... Another point to note is that 'established' writers in pro-zines write for it, including Marcus L. Rowland and Phil Masters. The only niggle is the appalling presentation...

COD is on #8 now and is neat in both presentation and writing style. It's nearly always full of interesting discursive articles and on the whole is a very pleasant read. From this issue, the editor plans to move into the weird and wonderful world of... wargames! For those who enjoy wargaming or simply wish to find out more about it, this comes highly recommended.

Tome of Horrors has now reached #6 and looks very smart, with its new word-processed print. This issue sports a rather silly cover titled 'The Party's Over', which alludes either the Games Day Weekend (at my place! - AB) or more likely, to the final installment (11 pages!) of the epic 'Lord of the Doorknockers' story, which has been serialised since #1! Apart from that, there are letters, reviews, some gaming stuff, and an obituary for one of its editors.

Bone of Contention is another light read, and has also got to Issue #6. It's got very little actual gaming material but is concerned with gaming. This issue had a horror cover, chat, game reviews, PBMs, fiction, waffle, and the highlight (almost) - the Special Scenario Section: The Royal Wedding! Miss it at your peril...

Theatre of Pain is a zine concerning itself with music, politics, the occult, PBMs, letters, fiction and chat. It's a fun read, but don't expect anything on RPGs! The editor has a nice, easy style of writing, which makes the whole zine very easy to get through. It's the sort of fanzine to get if you don't want to read about RPGs, but want something which is connected with the genre.

The last zine to mention is **Ivory Tower** #7, which was only marked by the whopping 22-page scenario for... wait for it... Flashing Blades! It is a great zine, but if you don't play Flashing Blades ask for Issue #6 or #8!

Hopefully, you'll find something in the above which takes your fancy, it's by no means the most comprehensive collection, but there must be something to interest you!? Of course if it's SF you want, there's always Cerebr-- ---- AB.

Moving on, a couple of interesting zines:

Moronica Ripsnore #2 has finally arrived, a mere six months after its first issue. It's a mixed bag, but pride of place has to go to the hilarious 'Gamesday-Quest' adventure in which you play the role of somebody travelling to Gamesday from Troon. There's also the rules for the Mean Arena PBM, ficion, letters, and chat. Moronica is one of those fanzines everybody should take a look at, it's full of fun!

Fire & Water #3 makes **Thunderwind** look tiny! 88 pages for 60p. ensure that you just can't go wrong with this. It's based around the editor's PBM game but there are articles for D&D and T&T too; along with book reviews, letters, fiction, and other stuff far too numerous to list. Whilst not all the material is great, there's something in it for everyone (except perhaps the SF fan!)

We have quite a lot of news this issue, the first of which concerns some losses:

Starquester has folded, it was slow and lingering, but inevitable. Perhaps a greater blow to mainstream RPG zines is the fold of **Sound & Fury**. Will life ever be the same? Also, **Iron Orchid** has *apparently* folded....

Have you voted in the **1986 Rolegaming Fanzine Poll**? If not, this is likely to be your last chance to do so, the deadline is February 28th and further details are available from Alex.

Finally, if you are even slightly interested in PBM zines, you could do worse than buy a copy of **Mission From God**. This is a new zine aiming to review all current PBM zines, and a few RPG ones. If you're looking for a zine to inflict your new Diplomacy variant upon, or just somewhere to get into some fast PBM games, MFG gives you all the information required. We're planning to do a special feature on PBM zines in the near future, so that'll be a chance to learn about them then too.

Relevant Addresses.

Alex Bardy, 28b Gladsmuir Road, Archway, London, N19 3JX. (Editor of **EH?**, #8 now out @ 40p - PBM/Chat AND Cerebretron, #2 now out @ 60p - SF/SFRPGs)
Ben Goodale, Cairnmore, Crianlarich, Perthshire, FK20 8QS. (Editor of **Utter Drivel**, #6 now out, @ 75p - FRP/Chat)
Telegraph Road: (60p 40 A5pp)
Jeremy Nuttall, 49 Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4QH
The Zadragorzette: (70p 36 A5pp)
Michael Jacobs, Elm Lodge, Sylvan Way, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 2RS
Imazine: (75p 20 A4pp)
Paul Mason, Top Flat, 19 Rusholme Road, Putney, London SW15 3JX
Superhero UK: (60p 36 A5pp)
Jonathan Clark, 9 Mounthilly Road, Chapelton, Lanarkshire, Scotland ML10 GRU
COD: (50p 32 A5pp)
Ralph Horseley, 74 Aeron Hall, C.L.W, Llanbadarn, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3AS
Tome of Horrors: (60p 40 A5pp)
Gary Egan, 96 Ormonde Avenue, Netherlee, Glasgow G44 3SL
Bone of Contention: (50p 40 A5pp)
Iain Smedley, 39 Baker Street, Potters Bar, Herts. EN6 2DZ
Theatre of Pain: (50p 32 A5pp)
Dave Robinson, 66 Lawton Avenue, Church Lawton, Stoke on Trent ST7 3AT
Ivory Tower: (65p 44 A5pp)
Geoff N. Dean, Digby Hall, Stoughton Drive South, Oadby, Leicester LE2 2NB
Moronica Ripsnore: (70p 52 A5pp)
Gordon McLennan, 36 Solway Place, Muirhead, Troon KA10 7EJ
Fire & Water: (60p 88 A5pp)
Andrew Hill, 'Brambles', 5a Echo Barn Lane, Farnham, Surrey GU10 4NL
Mission From God: (35p)
Pete Tulk, 76 Portland Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 9QU

DOOM AND GLOOM

ICE's plans to produce a rolegame based on the film **Brazil** could endanger the rather unpleasant but welcome future *Games Workshop* is designing for the UK.

Dark Future is Workshop's latest rolegame project, and is set on the Earth of 20 years hence. The background embraces aspects of **Bladerunner, Brazil,** and Gibson's **Neuromancer**. The overlap of backgrounds between ICE's game and Dark Future may well prove to be the latter's undoing.

But let's take a look at what Dark Future holds. The world is largely owned and run by the Japanese. Huge companies provide work and comfortable living for everyone; but those who choose to live in **the Sprawl** turn their backs on the comforts provided by the companies. PCs operate between these extremes; they can be loyal company employees by day, but belong to the Sprawl at night.

The high-tech, run down capitalist world is a rich setting for adventure, and GW seem at last to have latched on to a vaguely original idea for a rolegame.

KOAN COMFORT

The date for **Koancon '87** has been fixed for **31 July-2 August**, and the convention moves down the road from *Warwick University* to *Coventry Lanc- hester Polytechnic,* benefiting from greater transport facilities, anticipating a larger number of delegates this year. The cost of the convention has also changed, dropping to £22 residential and £7 non-residential- far cheaper than *Games Fair.* Participation games, a film, a quiz and talks from hobby personalities are among the events scheduled to take place. There is a minimum age limit of 16 due to licensing laws.

Information about Koancon '87 can be obtained by sending a SAE to: *Koancon, c/o Trevor Mendham, 53 Towncourt Crescent, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1PH.*

REFLECTIVE REALMS

D&D modules expected out soon include X12, **Skarda's Mirror**. This adventure, for characters of levels 5-8, allows players to venture through into unknown realms, where marauding bandits raid the countryside.

Immortals adventures continue to roll out, with IM2, **Wrath of Olympus** expected in February/March.

For Oriental Adventures there is OA3, **Ochimo the Spirit Warrior**. Characters of levels 5-7 have to deal with an unearthly spirit in an adventure that has some haunting moments.

Despite Frank Mentzer's departure for New Infinities, TSR plan to release another of his intermediate level adventures in the form of IM11, **Eye of the Needle.**

CHAINSAW CHAOS

At Games Workshop's Nottingham base, work continues on **Chainsaw Warrior**, a solo game in which the player controls a warrior who has to hack his way up to the top of a Manhattan Skyscraper through countless waves of robots and androids. Ripping Stuff.

Support packs for the hardback Basic **Runequest** are expected. No decision has yet been made whether to release the **Expert** Expansion or **Gods of Glorantha** as the first such pack.

From Citadel, look out for **Chaos Lords** with animal skin trappings. For ***Warh- ammer Fantasy Roleplay*** there will shortly be models of **Flimir** and **Zoats.** These are unusual because very few specific figures will be produced for the game - avid collectors will have already realised that most of the creatures illustrated in the rules are already produced by Citadel.

Weird figure of the month is the **Chaos Lavatory**, a semi-animate toilet tucking in to a snotling. Mad? They must be.

AMERICAN ARRIVALS

Recent Deliveries through the Town Crier's letterbox include packages from **GDW** and **Mayfair Games**. Sharper shops will already have them in stock.

The GDW delivery includes **Traveller 2300**, briefly covered last issue. It uses a similar system to original Traveller, but has more dice, fewer spaceships, and a character generation system that doesn't kill off characters. The background to Traveller 2300 has been generated by playing a power and politics game to determine the fate of the Earth's countries.

For **Twilight 2000** there are two new booklets: *Armies of the Night and RDF Sourcebook.* Armies of the Night is an adventure module set in the heart of New York. The devastated city has settled into a system of gang warfare and warlords vying for control. Summary? - the Big Apple reduced to a rotten core. RDF Sourcebook is the first sourcebook for Twilight 200, and provides the information needed to run adventures in what remains of the Persian Gulf countries.

Mayfair may well have produced the first roleplaying module you can wear. **Don't Ask**, a module featuring *Ambush Bug,* has a cut-out mask of Ambush Bug on the back cover. Another odd feature is that characters are assumed to be the stars of their own comic book. Odd. And the adventure, of course, gets even stranger.

Don't Ask's companions in the mail were **An Element of Danger**, featuring *Firestorm*, and **Pawns of Time,** which stars the *Legion of Superheroes*, Pawns is the first of a four-module series. They'll be having crossover modules next.

BIBBY BACK

Following the Town Crier's report that figure designer **Nick Bibby** had left *Citadel* for a French figures company, the Crier finds that he has recently rejoined Citadel. Must be the Nottingham air.

STIRRED INTO ACTION

Laboratory is a new firm which has started up to run fantasy P-B-M games. The game **'Further into Fantasy'**, is described as *'a surealist journey across the planes of space and time'.* It is accompanied by **'What's Stirring'**, a fan- type magazine which introduces both Laboratory and the game.

Laboratory aims to provide quality products rather than quantity of product. The booklet for Further into Fantasy is at least up to the quality of those for other commercial play by mail games. The Laboratory itself is best left to sum up its own game: *'It's a play by mail system that you won't believe.'*

The introductory package for Further into Fantasy costs £5, and each turn thereafter costs £1.20. Details from :*The Laboratory, Box 66, 19 Colborne Street, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 2EQ.*

Products planned to arrive later in 1987 include a series of gamebooks. A new roleplaying game is promised for March. **What's Stirring** aims to support all these with articles about the games and the game universe; contributions are encouraged.

Other firms are also planning to muscle in on the PBM business. Two companies from the computer games industry, *Level 9 Software* and *Newsfield Publishing,* are currently considering running computer moderated games. For the benefit of readers unaware of Newsfield's background to the games business, well, they produce *Crash, Zzap, and Amtix magazines.*

Games Workshop are currently investigating the possibility of running a *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* PBM game.

BY IAN MARSH

Adventurer Snoop Extraordinaire

BLACK PLASTIC HAIR

BY ROBERT LYN DAVIES

It rained, as always, through a dull cloudy sky obscured by night and the dark city blocks. A garish blue light provided the illumination, that flickered and pulsed as the toughened screen matrix showed yet another beer commercial. Far away a wailing police siren dopplered and faded. Another perfectly normal night.

Casser ordered another tall glass of chilled strong beer. He loosened a crumpled grey straggard jacket of two seasons fashion ago and sat back on one of the wooden seats in the Elysieum.

The beer came, half of it went down then, after that and with a half satisfied smile, he took a menu, hunted awhile and finally found an unoccupied booth where he sat down and thought about his order.

On the other side of the bar, a few youths played a game of **Karate Warbots**. Their holographic war machines twirled, kicked and blasted away at each other in a faked arena that resembled downtown Tokyo. One cheered, as his opponent's bot crumbled and fell. Then, without thinking they inserted their cards and carried on.

Casser dozed, it had been a long day. Fingers that didn't feel like his own called up the order. Just a simple dish of vegetable fries, accompanied by a burger of indeterminate origin.

The man with black plastic hair, a deep blue visor and leather trench watched Casser as he ate, and as he drunk. He wanted to be noticed. He was.

Smoothing back her wenches outfit, the waitress with red hair came over. Casser gave her an out of date card, she frowned. Casser paid in cash. Then, she spun round and went back to the bar as the juke box blasted out the heavily orchestrated strains of a latest release. One of the customers, a non-regular, called her over and whispered in her ear. Smiling, she took his hand and led it forward a little.

He grinned, then screamed as she snatched it forward and neatly flipped him onto his back. A hearty roar of laughter filled the bar.

Later, Casser climbed the steps beneath the exit. He avoided the creaky tread and opened the door. The slim man with gleaming plastic hair put down his drink and silently walked through the subdued light towards him.

Casser had been followed for two days now. Two days of fear and trepidation. Casser had had enough. In his pocket, trembling fingers felt the outline of a SR71 recoiless. Reassuring. He knew why they were following. He had some chips that would probably be very valuable in the wrong hands, and he was stuck with them. His link man hadn't shown up. Most probably, he was dead by now,

littering some alley in this rained out town.

Casser ran across the road and ducked behind a long abandoned truck. He stopped, he needed time to think, time to; he saw the man in a leather trench. Time to run. Casser dashed into the litter strewn alley behind him. It was dark and narrow, the kind of place that men like him died in every day. Behind him, came the regular soft footsteps that had haunted him for the past forty eight hours.

Casser side-stepped behind a fire escape and popped a plus pill in his mouth. No time to fall asleep now, just a bit longer he thought, and I'll get Mr. slick back there. Know his employers, and find his way out of this mess. Just can't sleep for a bit longer yet. He climbed up the fire escape - it rattled with every step.

On the roof, there was a handy air vent to hide behind. From inside the building, echoed party noises.

Fashionable black plastic hair popped up above the flat roof and paused. Eyeless with that visor on, yet definitely perceiving the scene in every detail. "Casser," he said in a rich conglom accent, "Come on out, you can't run for much longer. Hand me the chips and I'll be gone."

Casser whipped out the gun and took a potshot. It missed, but not wildly. The man didn't seem to look worried. He spoke again, "Casser, I think you should talk to me, I don't want you dead, I just want the chips."

"Why?"

"Glad to hear you Casser, can't you be a little bit more specific?"

"Why?' said Casser, "do you want the chips?"

"Because I'm being paid to get them, because I need them, because of what your client will do when it gets them. I'm a pro Casser, like you. You've done well. Give me the chips and you can go!"

Casser considered all this. "Can't give you the chips! Who do you work for?"

"You don't need to know, Casser!"

Casser fired again, the gun roared its muzzle flash illuminating the gloom. The man moved, quickly, almost imperceptively. He was quick!

"You're an arti!" exclaimed Casser. This was bad, an arti would be hard to kill. An arti would be tough and fast, and anyone who could afford an arti, was big. "Which corporation bugman?"

"Insults won't help you, Casser. Neither will that gun, hand over the chips before I get violent." Casser knew that that soft voiced threat wasn't empty.

The man with black plastic hair did a gymnastic somersault onto the roof, he rolled swiftly behind a chimney. All Casser could do was stare, the movements had been too perfect. His opponent was definitely an arti.

"Want to know what's on the chips Casser? Want to know what it is you're dying for?, or are you just a little man doing his job like a good boy?" Casser's hand tensed up against the trigger. But, he did want to know what was on the chips. In fact, he suddenly realised that he hadn't even seen the chips. They were still in the black plastic box that was taped to his torso.

"Scared to answer, Casser. Scared that I might know something you don't. Scared you drop your guard when talking, Casser?"

Casser replied. Three shots from the SR71. Two punching holes in the chimney, the third richochet-ing off. No noise, then...

"Casser, that wasn't a bad try, but not good enough. **Give me the chips.**" Casser started to tremble. This was fear, real fear. Casser began to search for a way out. He had to lose his tail fast.

No way out just another fire escape a hundred metres away. The arti could probably cover that distance twice as fast as he could. "Come out of there Casser, come on, I won't hurt you." It laughed a deep inhuman laugh. Then the man with black plastic hair started to scuttle nearer the vent.

Casser put his gun into auto mag discharge mode. There were five shots left in it. That was about two and a half seconds worth of fire. He held the gun tight, he turned, took a deep breath and ran for the other fire escape.

Closer and closer came the padding footsteps behind him. The edge of the roof seemed to go further and further away. Casser began to imagine hands closing about his neck. His hands gripped the gun tighter. His nerve broke. Casser turned and dropped to one knee, he squeezed the trigger. The man with black plastic hair almost reached him. A thunderous stream of bullets exploded from the gun. Two and a half seconds of time, stretched to infinity. The arti dived down, trying to dodge, a few of the bullets hit, jerking its chest and arms up into the air. Then it fell, sprawling to the ground. Casser almost tumbled over with relief, as two days of frantic effort tried to assault him. Not a hair on his opponent's head was disturbed.

Casser turned to go. He thought he heard something behind him. Looking back, he thought he saw one of the arti's arms move - Casser ran.

The journey back to the hotel elegance was a long one. The american cab driver prattled on about food, the worsening weather and the war. Casser slept, he needed it.

Back in his room, Casser slept again, but not before reloading his gun and locking every door and window in that characterless place.

In the morning rain had stopped, the sky was cloudless and hazy, by the time Casser had wakened. The cosmopolitan crowds had started to play the city's unmelodious theme. Casser showered, the water wasn't really warm enough so he finished quickly. Breakfast was also fast. The hotel wasn't much good on decent food - He'd eat again outside.

What to do? The company hadn't given him a return pass. He might be able to get a ticket and a forged passport from one of the finders. Casser mused about going over to the other side. That was impossible now. He'd killed their arti. Anyhow, he didn't even know who the other side were for this job. He considered taking the chips to their destination, wherever that was. Casser decided that it was about time he saw what he was carrying.

The lid fell off the kevlar box after about twenty minutes of fiddling with its multiple catches. Inside, under several layers of lambs wool and enclosed in translucent plastic, was a single circuit board with embossed memory chips. Its interface was a standard EOS 2402. No decal gave away the board's function, there were no hints of its import.

It might have come from a child's toy, or even a missile guidance system. There was that interface though.

Casser stuck the box onto himself with some fresh micropore tape and climbed into a silk Hyensi jump suit with large pockets. He RT'ed to the airport.

The train was fast, silent and crowded. Casser left the airport as soon as he arrived. Around it, in small stalls or the backs of vans were finders. One face - in a black Nissan city wagon with a custom star spray paint job - he recognised.

"Hi there, Chen. How's business?" the inscrutable oriental face looked up and smiled slightly.

"Okay there, run boy. You here on business too, I guess. Let me guess, you're in trouble again. Want help eh?"

Casser liked Chen, but sometimes it could feel that the little man could read his mind. "Right on all counts, Chen. Can you get me a ticket out of here? Don't care where, so long as it's not Latin Quarter or Alaska" Chen disappeared inside his wagon for a few minutes.

He reappeared. "Come back tomorrow, Casser, and I'll have a ticket to London. You need a pass as well?" Casser nodded. "No trouble," says Chen, "It'll just cost you double that's all. Half now, the rest tomorrow. Be here at nine, and ready to fly by eleven"

"Thanks Chen, I needed that."

"Like I said, no trouble, but I do need 900 U.N. dollars off you now. No credit you know."

Casser dug deep into his pocket and pulled out a thick wad of notes. He counted out Cen's 900. "Here you are Chen, see you again tomorrow"

"Bye, run boy, and good luck." Casser merged into the crowd and made his way back to the train.

The next stop was HK central, you could buy anything there. Casser wanted a terminal, with an EOS 2402 interface. Finding a store with what he wanted didn't take long, which was good because he knew that there wasn't much time left to sort out this mess. Casser paid for the Amstrad with his emergency trip card, he resented doing that, but he'd have run out of cash without it. After that, he bought a strong coffee with a large vienese pastry and went back to Hotel Elegance.

It took five minutes to unpack the terminal, and another five to power it up and flick through the manual. Then Casser plugged in the chips.

The usual screen prompts and messages faded into a blaze of colour, which rapidly filled the screen with a psychadelic maze. Slowly, the weird entry routine subdued itself to reveal the purpose of the chips. They contained the dossier, or more likely several dossiers merged together. Their content was

disturbing, hard to understand, but definitely disturbing.

After about an hour of hard study, Casser began to have ideas about the chips. They contained the virus map. Not a virus program designed to crack a computer system, but a real honest to goodness, man made virus. The sort of thing that had been banned long ago. Not that bans had ever really stopped genetic manipulation research. The virus had a purpose, it was a weapon, designed to attack the peculiar nervous system that was used in artificial people.

Suddenly, Casser wasn't surprised to have had an arti chase after him. If this was ever released, then Mr. Slick and all his kind would have been dead in a few years.

Casser carried on reading the supporting material that flowed onto the screen. Most of it came from assorted world Data research files - that figured - the arti's had been banned before they were developed. But most corporations still managed to learn how to manufacture them. Right now, it was arti soldiers who were fighting for both sides in the Latin war. But he still didn't know who had tipped the arti off about what he was carrying. Or who had knocked out his link man (but he had a good idea that he had met the assailant). Or who this information was meant to go to. Casser decided to dig deeper into the files.

Another hour of work - and three varieties of tea - later, he discovered who had designed the virus. The **Salisbury Burma Corporation** was one of the rising stars of the new pharmaceutical industry. The SB Corp had been paid by someone who wanted an effective anti arti weapon that was absolutely deadly. Now, who had wanted that kind of illegal research done? Find out who that was, thought Casser, and he'd have his client. Then all he had to do was deliver his package and get on that HST tomorrow. The company would get him out of London easily and he'd be back to normal, hopefully with some leave to boot.

The phone rang with a shrill tone that reverberated through Casser's spine. He lifted the receiver. "Mr. Casser, sir," it was the receptionist, "I've got an incoming call for you. I know you didn't want to be disturbed, but the caller says it's very important." Casser hung up without replying. No one knew which hotel he had chosen, he'd been followed again. Casser reached for a suitcase and started to pack.

Casser reached the lobby with a suitcase in one hand and his new computer in the other. He walked out without paying, or returning his key. Hopefully, that would buy him a little more time. There was a bright red taxi outside. He got in it and told the driver to move without giving him a destination. The driver protested, but then he noticed Casser's money, so he drove off quickly.

For a while Casser sat back in silence. He needed some answers, and quickly. "Do you know where a bar called The Elysieum is?" He waited. The translator in the cab took a few minutes to ask the driver for him. It sounded like mandarin, but had such a cheap, tinny voice , that Casser couldn't be sure. When the reply came, he discovered that the translator's English wasn't much better. He wondered why he hadn't noticed it earlier. Such a slip was unforgiveable in his profession. Casser realised that he needed to finish this job fast, before anything else went wrong. Fortunately, the driver did know the Elysieum. In fact, it sounded like he knew every bar in town.

Twenty minutes later, Casser had paid off the driver and stood outside the Elysieum. This time, its screen matrix showed the latest in a long honourable line of sleek sports cars.Casser went in.

There were only a handful of customers there, and a barman that Casser hadn't seen before. He asked the barman to look after his bags while he ordered a pizza and gave him a large tip.

He soon found the fire escape again. He climbed it, to the scene of last night's shooting. The roof looked worse by day, but Casser ignored this and looked for the body. It wasn't there. Dead men don't walk, Casser knew that, even if they were arti's. Either the police had called here, or the man with the black plastic hair was still alive.

A noise from the fire escape made Casser spin around, he didn't like what he saw. Black plastic hair and a blue visor pulled themselves up to roof level with a pair of bandaged arms. The leather trench had been discarded and replaced by a dirty yellow body warmer. Its face was distorted by pain. The man with black plastic hair limped onto the roof. "Hello, Casser, looking for some answers?"

Casser put his hand in a pocket and drew the SR71. "Yes, and I think I'm going to get them. Do you want to tell me a story?"

The man with black plastic hair took a step forward, Casser let the safety off his gun with an audible click. The man froze.

"That's better," said Casser, "now who do you work for?"

"I can't tell you that, but I can make a deal with you!"

Casser stared at him, "I don't think I'm that interested, but I do want to know who the chips belong to."

The arti slowly slid his hand into a breast pocket. "Hold It!", screamed Casser.

"It's not a gun," came the reply, "you give me the chips and I'll give you the passport, ticket and card that your linkman had for you."

Casser motioned him to go on. Carefully, the arti pulled a crumpled brown envelope from his pocket and tossed it towards Casser, who caught it with his free hand. Opening an envelope while holding a gun on someone is not easy and it took Casser quite a while to ascertain its contents. "Okay," he finally said, "it's real. I won't ask you about my linkman, but I guess you want the chips." The arti with black hair waited, "But you see," went on Casser, "I knew my linkman quite well, we'd worked a lot together over the past two years." He pulled the trigger, a single round hit the arti's left shin. The man with black hair fell to the ground. "I know torture won't make you talk, but I needed to make sure that you wouldn't do anything against me, but you should consider this. If you don't tell me who wants the chips and who paid for them, then I'll just down load their contents into the world data network." Casser stared at the man with black plastic hair.

"Tristantin Enterprises," groaned the arti, "they want the chips." Casser could accept that, rumour has it that Tristantin was a major producer of artificial people. A virus like the one on the chips could really hurt them bad. He knelt down, "Okay, my fashionable friend, who originally ordered those chips? Do you know that?" The answer came, "Tristantin Enterprises, they wanted to find out if anyone could make a biological agent capable of knocking out their artificial soldiers without harming humans."

"That sounds reasonable, but it still doesn't explain you, unless Tristantin are trying to double-cross my company. You killed a friend of mine, why shouldn't I just avenge him... now?"

The arti's hair was still in perfect style. He looked up at Casser and said, "U.N. Law Enforcement, Eastern Division. We want those chips to use as a bargaining agent in the war. Tristantin would only hide them somewhere. We can use them to persuade Tristantin and the others to stop arti production."

"I'd like to help you," said Casser, 'but if I let you go, or give you the chips, then I'm going to have a hard time explaining this; if you let me get away that is." Then, "I didn't know the U.N. used men like you."

"Well kept secret. Several of us defected from all sides in the war, to try and find an end for it. The U.N. promised us that they'd give us unlimited citizenship if we helped. Let me show you my ID."

"Get it slowly then" said Casser, as he watched the hand of the man with black plastic hair dip into his pocket to retrieve a battered leather wallet.

The holographic badge responded well to the usual field tests. The man with black plastic hair was a U.N. agent. "I'll give you the chips," said Casser, "but in your report, you've got to claim to have got them from my link man." The arti smiled, despite the obvious pain it was in.

"Thank you, Casser. I agree to that." Casser took the black kevlar box from a hidden pocket in his jump suit, he put it on the ground where he stood and went to the fire escape. "Can you look after it in that state?"

"Of course," said the man with black plastic hair as he stood up and walked over to the small box, with no apparent trace of his feigned injuries, "don't worry Casser, everything else was true."

Casser turned away, and climbed down the fire escape. He went into the Elysieum and ate his pizza. His luggage was still intact, his new airline ticket put him on a flight to Paris that left in two hours time, and he still had a copy of the chips, locked away inside his brand new terminal. All he hoped now was that the boss would accept his story.

The flight back was slow. He got his pay and a week's leave. Then he was sent for retraining.

THE HEROIC AGE

ROLE-PLAYING IN THE BRONZE AGE

BY P.ELLIOT

A culture-based campaign:

The weight of background information pertaining to any specific ancient culture at a specific time is vast, and in historical literature, such reference works are definitely **not** referee-friendly. In contrast, when designing a modern-day campaign, it soon becomes apparent that what is needed to create opportunities for enjoyable role-playing is a well-documented culture with only brief, tentative reference to actual documented events. Imagine, in a game of **Call Of Cthulhu**, strict adherence to historical or political happenings- if limited by historical accuracy, the player characters would soon find their actions confined severely- there would be no 'stamping out' of Ku Klux clan cultists, no attempts to save (or assassinate) the President or other noteable historical figures, nor any attempts to sink ships (or prevent their sinking). These are all common occurences in CoC scenarios, where the effect of the players' actions more often than not leads to an alteration of political or historical facts.

If this were not the case, one would soon be bogged down in factual detail, and in addition to this, most historical chronologies are so well detailed that the player-characters would have little or no chance to gain reasonable positions of power (such as military, political or religious leaders).

A Bronze-Age Campaign:

Abandoning my Gloranthan RuneQuest campaign about two years ago, I adopted a 'historical' campaign; a Bronze-Age setting based on the volatile days of c.1250 B.C. This was about the same time as the Battle of Kadesh, the Biblical Exodus and the Siege of Troy. Central to the campaign was the Greece of myth and legend, probably the most mis-portrayed culture ever, falling prey to the corrupted interpretations of television, the cinema, Ray Harryhausen and role-playing games.

One noteable representation (though far from perfect) is that of Kevin's encounter with the Achæon King Agamemnon in **TIME BANDITS.** One common mistake made by filmic incarnations of such Heroes, (which, incidentally, was also made by the Classical Greeks later on), is to assume that the people of the myths were identical to the storytellers and listeners of this Classical era. To distinguish Mycenean culture from Homer's Dark Age culture, I refer heavily to ***"From Homer to Mycenae".***

The documented fact of Mycenaean (Bronze Age) Greece was recorded on perishable papyrus or wood. This is good news for referees, bad news for ancient historians! This means that the Bronze Age provides a historical setting, allowing the GM to select those few documented 'facts' and incorporate them to his campaign, yet allowing him to improvise and install his own 'facts'- such topics as magic, the existence of mythological beasts, etc. **based** on the Greek myths **perhaps**, but in the GM's world, **facts**.

Character Generation:

AGE & SEX:

Maturity came early in the ancient world. For beginning characters, I suggest the age of 14. If players dislike this idea, point them in the direction of Silverberg's **Gilgamesh the King**, where Gilgamesh began adventuring at that age.

In this male-dominated society, girls often married at a younger age than their husbands, anywhere between 10 and 20 years old. To allow for this, there would be a very small number of female adventurers (most staying at home to tend to husband and master), and very few unmarried women about (who would be scorned by polite society, or else were harlots). The number of widows, however, is probably significantly higher than in medieval adventuring society.

To simulate the lower average life expectancy of these times, (about 40 years), aging should begin earlier and be quite harsh, to reflect poor living conditions and a lack of effective medicine and hospital practices. Poor widows, of course, with no husband to provide for her, would quickly come to grief if she did not re-marry; preferably an active young adventurer- so beware of elderly women!

EDUCATION:

Upon maturity, characters will have virtually no effective education, with only a small minority able to read and write.

The literate class at this time varied from country to country; in Egypt (the period of the 19th. Dynasty), it consisted of scribes, nobles and priests; in Greece, the aristocracy considered such skills were effeminate and unworthy of their attentions; throughout northern Europe, of course, literacy was something for the far future.

The effects of education on the adventurer would be an inability or inaccessibility of magic, unless rigorously trained from an early age. Scribes and wizards would therefore be well-versed in writing, and hence in creative thinking, many of whom were considered great philosophers (the assumption that illiteracy and philosophy are not compatible attributes). They would also have greater access to the communi- cations networks, able to pass accurate written messages via pigeon or mess- enger boy, a feat unavailable to most commoners.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE:

There are no standing armies at this time, only officer nobles, a militia of ordinary folk, and mercenaries. The marine equivalent of the mercenaries were the pirates of the **Aegean**. The most effective of these were the Achaean Greeks themselves, and the pirates of **Lukka**. Most beginning PCs would, therefore, be of a *barbarian* or *thief* type, with exceptions such as royalty, nobility and apprentices to tradesmen, craftsmen and wizards. There may be a small proportion of minstrels and nomads.

WEAPONS:

Some skills and combat changes are necessary for a campaign set in these times. The most fundamental is the employ ment of bronze (an alloy of abundant copper and expensive tin) for nearly all weapons and metalwork. Metal technology wasn't to improve until the passage of a couple of hundred years (the iron age). Even so, some iron could be smelted - in Asia Minor especially, and the iron from the occasional meteorite. The Greeks correctly venerated these iron-rich rocks as gifts from heaven. (**Zeus**?) Iron was rare enough to be placed at a value 50 times the equivalent weight in silver.

There are no greatswords, crossbows, rapiers or flails available. It is strange that many rules systems include javelins as a viable alternative to bows-- the only reason they were employed was because the ancients used the bow in such a fashion as to make the javelin just as effective. Greek and Roman archers only pulled the string back to the chest, and cut their effectiveness by more than 50%. Hence, the javelin could be hurled with the same range as this primitive use of the bow, and was far more damaging.

Both self and composite bows were used mainly for hunting, while the javelin was the primary missile weapon. To reflect this, the effective range of a bow should be reduced by 2/3 in the hands of soldiers of the Mediterranean region. Some peoples did pull the bowstring to the ear, including the Scythians of the Classical Era, and this is why Heracles the archer was said to have been taught by a Scythian.

ARMOUR:

A wide range of armour types were employed, including leather, linen (waxed and quilted cloth), cuirboilli (wax-hardened leather), scalemail, ring mail, brigandine (metal plates between leather), chainmail and plate mail.

However, these were costly, and would be unavailable to beginning adventurers unless of some financial standing, or else through inheritance.

SKILLS:

Navigation is one skill which requires particular attention. The **Phoenicians** were excellent sailors; their secret was navigation by the stars- a breakthrough! Prior to **1250** B.C., navigation relied on currents, coasts, winds and the sun's position in the sky. This meant, in effect, that **Mediterranean** sailors couldn't travel effectively by night, or in fog, and had to haul their boats up onto the shore and wait the night out.

Another skill requiring attention is that of **Equestrian** ability (riding). Throughout the **Aegean** area, the common breed of horse was the **Tarpan** (now effectively extinct), which was hardly bigger than today's Shetland pony. A **Pylian** fresco shows the ears of one such mount level with the shoulders of a standing warrior. Horse riding was rare, practised by couriers, which rendered a heavy reliability on the chariot as opposed to the cavalry. In game terms, equestrian skill should be extended to cover the handling of horse teams- such as those that pull chariots and ploughs, etc. It is well-worth looking at Avalon-Hill's chariot-racing game, ***Circus Maximus*** for inspiration.

Commerce in the pre-Dark Age era is either a headache or a challenge, depending on how you look at it. The fact is coinage was developed by **King Croesus** in **550** B.C. and up until that time, a system of barter was predominant. Fortunately, an efficient system of weights had been in use for some time, the heart of which was the shekel. In **The Hittites**, by O.R. Gurrey, a price list of goods in shekels of silver exists, which can be extrapolated to include all the items in most FRP rulebooks. It is prob- ably suitable to take the cost of a cart horse as a base, and evaluate prices from there.

MAGIC & RELIGION:

These should be as prominent as the GM feels necessary. I prefer to use the RuneQuest cult system, where magic is a gift from the worshipped deity, and is only available to members of at least initiate status. Again referring to **Gilgamesh the King**, magic is apparent in the eyes of the characters (PCs), but only the author (GM) knows if it exists at all, and to what degree. This simple act of concealment and downplay of the supernatural increases the feeling of mystery and awe within the campaign. Magic should be both subtle and frightening... Of course, the NPCs and the society in which they abide must believe in it whole-heartedly to get the right effect.

These feelings of uncertainty and ignorance on the players' parts can be carried further; the GM can use it to provide a 'feel' for the campaign. The Mediterranean Sea, for example, was given the name of **the Great Green** by the Egyptians, in the same way we use the phrase **'the Deep Blue Sea'**. The GM should always attempt to depict the world from the commoner's point of view. A great way to do this is to provide the players with a map of the known world. See the maps of **Ptolemy, Herodotus** and **Hecataeus** for inspiration, and hear your players cry *"...but we should have sighted land seven days ago!"*. Of course, it will be necessary to ban maps and atlases during play (even so, who is to say that the game world is the same as we know it today, or if indeed the world **is** flat?).

Even if you don't plan to adventure amongst the greats in history; **Enkidu, Heracles, Gilgamesh, Kessis the Hunter, Moses (?)** and **Odysseus**, then you are at least now aware of the kind of things which can change with time, and the things that make historical role-playing unique.

ODDS-AND-SODS:

Some of things worth mentioning in passing include the domestication of cats in Achaean Greece (**Graves** stated that they were not domesticated until Classical times, and that house-hold snakes were used to exterminate mice. However, frescoes exist in Crete which show hunters using large cats to attack marsh fowl); calendars and time-keeping (the Myceneans used a lunar calendar); the lack of inns and taverns of any sort, robbing most adventurers of their usual source of gossip, adventure and employment. This can be replaced with worship at temples, or army 'barracks'; and religion (the **Olympian** deities were not fully formed at this time, and the majority of worship seems to have been directed at a great Goddess or Mother Nature).

To close, I would just like to inform **Adventurer** readers that the above information is correct to the best of my research ability, source material and reasoning. If any of you can offer complimentary, supplementary or contradictory detail, I would like you to get in touch and let me know.

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Religion in fantasy gaming

To kick off our theme on religion, an article for Call Of Cthulhu players/ Keepers which complements the Cults Of Cthulhu article in Adventurer #3. This time, it's about religions for PCs to adopt. For those who don't play CoC, it is still a worthwile read, moreso if your campaign is set in the 20th. Century.

RELIGION FOR CALL OF CTHULHU PCS

For many players of Chaosium's **Call of Cthulhu** game, one of the main attractions of the game is that it is primarily a **detective** game, in which the player-characters are normal people, wrenched from their normally sedate lives and thrust into abnormal nightmares in which they must battle, and hopefully defeat, the minions of some great universal evil. This of course makes for great roleplaying, especially as you watch your heroic investigator, brandishing his all-singing, all-dancing, amazingly powerful, **Elder Sign**, being once more dispatched by a horde of deranged cultists, all of whom are chanting **"What's he doing with that funny looking rock?"**. And, although it is fair to say that the type of defence offered by Elder Signs and the like, when combined with a quick mind and good dice, was very effective in the early days of CoC, those days are sadly no more. I feel that this is due to the fact that as players have become more and more experienced to the ways of the Mythos, the older, dare I say **easier**, Lovecraftian scenarios present little challenge to the battle-hardened individuals we all have nestling in our character folders. And so the only solution, for Chaosium and its keepers, has been to produce more powerful enemies in their scenarios, and this is, inevitably, what has happened. No problem, I hear you say, as it all balances in the end. The problem, however, is that it doesn't, because when our Mythos bashing characters are seen to be having little trouble in dealing with the run-of-the-mill cultist and slimy monsters, which were so effective in the early days, then the only solution left in the high priest's arsenal is **"Oh Mighty Cthulhu, come on down, the time is right"** or words to that effect, and once more another character bites the slime.

One solution to this problem is to allow the weaker, beginning characters to obtain some form of natural defence, thereby making them of greater interest to players of these hardened investigators who can then be allowed to retire gracefully and in one piece. As to the source of this natural defence I feel that religion represents the best option, after all if the power of the Mythos can be manifested in physical forms then surely the more normal dieties, such as **Buddha** or **Krishna** should be able to bestow some abilities upon their adherents. I am not suggesting that keepers allow the game to sink into a sideshow, as the main action revolves around **Allah** and **Nyarlathotep** battling it out somewhere in space. What I am suggesting is that each of the major, and a few of the minor, religions of the world have the capacity to bestow abilities and powers on its chosen followers. This does not mean that Cliff Edge, famed PI and Mythos expert, is also a practising archbishop in his spare time, and can perform resurrections at the drop of a mitre, what I am suggesting is that certain qualifying characters should be given the opportunity to possess certain, semi-magical abilities. Some suggestions for these abilities are given later.

In an attempt to give some idea of the different religions and how they can be used, I have provided a short list of the major religious groups available with a brief description of each.

Christianity

For the purpose of play, Christianity includes Roman Catholicism, Methodist, Anglican, Baptist and the multitude of splinter groups that exist. As most player characters are American or European in origin, it is fairly safe to assume that most of them will be Christians, in one form or another. In game terms however, Christianity is perhaps the weakest of the major religions as it is primarily a passive religion, with policies of 'love thy neighbour' and 'turn the other cheek'. I feel that only certain character occupations, such as clergyman or missionary, will have regular access to the abilities offered by the christian faith, but all adherents should be able to benefit from them in some way.

Judaism

If a player character is not a Christian, then it is more than likely that he would be Jewish, as this religion has old and strong links with both Europe and North America. For the purposes of play, allow Jewish PCs a few more offensive capabilities than Christians, as one of the main tenets of Judaism is 'an eye for an eye'.

Hinduism

The Hindu faith is practised primarily in the sub-continent of India, and it comprises a multiplicity of cults and sects, all of which are affiliated in one way or another. A good deal of the time spent in prayer by a Hindu is devoted to a form of ancestor worship, and because of this, Hindus should have a limited ability to request spiritual aid from character's forefathers. This ability is best represented in play, by the keeper revealing, by way of dream or riddle, a clue which can assist the PC in his mission. The chance of receiving these hints could be making a roll equal to, or less than, the character's POW.

Buddhism

Although there are several forms of Buddhism practised throughout Asia, they are sufficiently alike to allow them to be considered the same. The main benefit of Buddhism, with regards to play, is that all adherents are taught to use meditation which can be used as a form of 'Mind Shield' against SAN attacks. To use this in play it is suggested that the Buddhist character be allowed to use his POW to modify any SAN roll, this modification could be something along the lines adjusting the dice roll by 5 percentiles per point of temporary POW expended.

Islam

Islam, like Christianity, has spread right across the globe. The main areas of concentration are Arabia, Northern Africa and Southern Asia. Because Islam preaches that permission to join Him in his heaven, is the greatest gift possible for Allah to grant to his followers, Muslims should expect little, or no help from Him.

Tribal Religion

This represents the various forms of religion that are practised by groups such as the African Bushmen, Polynesian islanders or American Indians. As these represent the oldest religions known to man, in many ways they are the most powerful. Keepers should only allow players to have tribal characters if they can sufficiently justify them, and because of their nature, they should only be allowed to begin play in possession of around 20-30% in Cthulhu Mythos. This is because both tribal and Mythos rituals share similar origins deep within pre-history. In addition to this knowledge of the Mythos, tribal characters should be allowed to enter play in possession of some spells. The decision as to which spells is left up to the keeper to decide. It is recommended that the type of spell should reflect the natural environment of

the characters' tribe, for example: Polynesian islanders could have spells such as '**Contact Deep One**', whereas American Indians are more likely to know how to '**Contact Serpent People**'.

Druidism

Like tribal religions, the practise of Druidism is incredibly old, and therefore quite powerful.. This religion is only available to player characters originating from Britain, Ireland and Northern France. Certain restrictions must be met before a PC is allowed the benefits of Druidism. One method is to require the prospective candidate to prove his worth by succeeding in Botany, Archaeology and Occult rolls. Any PC who can succeed in all three will immediately be granted the **Summon Dark Young of Shub Niggurath** spell. Abilities beyond this are up to the Keeper to decide.

General Abilities of Religions

All areas of **consecrated** or **Holy Ground** should provide limited protection against Mythos creatures. One method could be to cause the creature to suffer a reduction of DEX or STR as they operate within areas blessed with 'God's Power', whilst another is to cause mental damage to these creatures as their will is attacked. These methods could be resolved by assigning a POW rating to a 'blessed area', and then matching this rating against the POW of the target on the resistance table. It is suggested that this POW rating be a fixed amount which must be spread amongst all attackers. Another suggestion is that, if a cleric or priest is available, then it should be possible to reinforce this protective shield by the permanent sacrifice of POW points. These defences should have no effect on normal (?) cultists. Some suggested values for holy buildings are given below;

Family Chapel or Shrine :-
1 POW for every 25 years built
Small Country Church or Temple: -
1 POW for every 10 years built
Small Town Church or Temple:-
1 POW for every 7 years built
Large Town Church or Temple:-
1 POW for every 5 years built
Cathedral or Major Temple:-
1 POW for every 3 years built

Holy Water - and incenses should be given some form of power against minor Cthulhoid creatures. One suggestion is to treat this power as a form of poison or acid, which causes physical damage to the servitor races. The strength of these substances should be based upon the POW of the cleric or priest who performed the blessing, as a Parish Priest or wandering monk should have weaker powers than an Archbishop.

Exorcism - is best represented in play by the cleric attempting the exorcism pitting his POW against that of the invading spirits on the resistance table. Success for the cleric should force the 'Spirits' to vacate the area for a period of time in proportion to the cleric's POW, perhaps 1 day per point. However, if victory goes to the spirit then the cleric should permanently lose 1D3 or 1D6 POW. If a die roll gives a result less than or equal to the priest's power then the spirit should be permanently banished, and if the roll is a fumble, ie. 96 or higher, then the priest should become possessed and thereafter be played by the Keeper until a successful exorcism is accomplished.

Faith - When a player is threatened with SAN loss, some kind of defence should be offered by 'Prayer Power' or similar such displays of faith. One method of utilising this in play is to allow the player to roll under their PC's POW - a success would assume automatic success in any SAN rolls relating to a specific incident.

Ressurection - should only be granted to very high ranking clerics and even then only very, very rarely. It is suggested that the power take the form of the spell given in the rulebook.

Artefacts and Their Powers

All of the above mentioned religions have some object or artefact which is held in great esteem by the worshippers. Items such as the Heilige Lance or Buddha's Hip Bone are considered, by many, to possess magical abilities. These artefacts can be used to great effect in a campaign, as they could form the focus of play as both player characters and cultists attempt to gain possession and, ultimately, control of some ancient and powerful relic. This idea has been used extensively in books and films such as James Herbert's 'The Spear' or Spielberg's 'Raiders of the Lost Ark', and if it's good enough for them, it's certainly good enough for us roleplayers.

It is not the aim of this article to provide definite rules for the use of religion in play and because of this, we have no intention of providing a list of prayers, rites, spells or potions, as these should be determined by the individual Keepers.

The next article is specifically for **RuneQuest II** *GMs, although it could easily be incorporated into* **RuneQuest III,** *and is of use to any campaign where organised religion is of importance.*

KNERAIN- THE CULT OF ARMOURERS

A GLORANTHAN CULT FOR RUNEQUEST II

by Mark Fletcher

Knerain was born early during Godtime of **Kargan Tor**, the god of war, and a daughter of **Mostal**. He was called upon by the *Celestial Court* to forge Death. The God resented his great work being hidden away and left the Spike to travel *Glorantha*, telling of his creation to anyone who would listen. None believed him but **Eurmal** the Trickster, who then led **Humakt** to the place where Death was hidden, releasing that power into the world.

During the *'War of the Gods'*, Knerain forged deadly weapons for all combatants, but took no side in any struggle. When Chaos crept upon the world, the god saw what Death, his creation had ultimately caused and joined the fight against the Chaos Hordes.

Since the *Great Compromise*, Knerain has remained the God of all armourers and smiths who provide weaponry for the warring peoples and nations of Glorantha.

Regarding life after death, no promises are made to Lay members or Initiates, but the spirits of the cult Rune levels will be guided to the great forge-fire where Knerain created Death, there to forge weaponry in readiness for the final battle against Chaos.

This Cult has *'Runes of Death'*, the tool it creates, and **Fire**, the power it harnesses to do so.

Nature of the Cult:

As long as there is fighting and war in Glorantha, this cult will still exist to provide weaponry.

The cult has little political power, but during wartime, a cult representative will always sit in council for consultation about the availability of arms and armour.

Chaos cults generally are hated because, although the cult would never admit it, Chaos is often seen as an extension of Death. Humakt is well liked because his cult make a clean and honourable use of Death. However, Zorak Zoran and similar deities earn the cult's dislike because of their indiscriminate use of Death.

Organisation:

There is very little of this due to the fact that each temple will serve a different, and often opposed, power. However, unless restrained, cultists meeting others will pass on new forging techniches etc.

Each temple of Knerain is called a Forge, and is headed by the most skilled Rune Lord present.

The only holy place of this cult is the great Forge-Fire where Knerain forged Death. Although this does not exist on the mundane plane it is often sought while on Heroquest.

The holy day for this cult occurs on Fireday of Deathweek in each season, and the High Holy Day is celebrated on Godday, Deathweek of Fire Season.

Lay Membership:

All races except those tainted with Chaos are accepted into the cult.

Lay members must work for one week per season for the cult.

Lay members are allowed access to the cult workshops and the use of armouring tools.

Lay members are taught *Armour/ Weapon/ Shield Making* at half cost and *Hammer* at normal cost.

No Spells are taught.

Initiate Status:

Prospective Initiates must have spent at least two seasons as a lay member and have 60%+ in one Armouring skill.

Initiates must work for the cult at least three weeks in each season.

Initiates are allowed room and board at the temple. They may also purchase bronze metal cheaply (5L. per ENC point) for the making of personal weapons and armour.

Initiates are taught *weapon/ armour/ shield making* for free, if an equal time is spent working for the cult (above that already required). They are also taught *hammer* at half cost.

Dullblade and *Fireblade* are taught at half normal cost, *Ironhand* at twice normal cost.

Runelord-ship:

Runelords are titled *Master Armourers* and lead the cult, ranking above priests.

Candidates must have 90% in two armouring skills and any hammer, plus another two skills from the following: a weapon, shield, a third armouring skill, oratory or listen.

Runelords must work for the cult five weeks per season.

Runelords receive the normal benefits of an allied spirit and Divine Intervention.

Runepriest-hood:

Due to the combat- orientation of cult Rune-Magic, priests often organise the temple defence forces.

Candidates must have POW18+ and 90% in one armouring skill.

All DEX-based skills except armouring skills fall to DEXx5. Priests must work for the cult for 5 weeks per season.

All normal benefits are received.

Priests may sacrifice for all 1pt spells and summon small salamanders.

Cult Special Runemagic:

Enchant Rune Metal - Stackable, reuseable.

This spell will enchant 15ENC points per point of spell of a Rune metal (such as lead, gold) to the strength and durability of Bronze.

Crack - Stackable, reuseable.

See Cults of Terror p.43

Sever Spirit - 3pts, unreuseable (only available to High Priests).

See cults of Prax p.37

Spirit of Reprisal - Initiates and Rune-levels quitting the cult will be cursed: any weapons and armour they make will appear fine but will actually be poor ($^1/_2$ HP/ AP, +1ENC, -2 damage.

Associated Cults:

Humakt: Knerain Armourers provide finely-made swords for Humakti warriors and in return are taught *sword* at half cost.

Yelmalio - The cult makes weapons for the Yelmalian soldiery and in return cultists are allowed to learn the skill of 2h Spear and Shield.

Cult Income - Payment for weapons and armour is split 70/30 between the cult and the craftsman.

The above articles include one for the PCs and one for the GMs. Next, we have an article for the players themselves; role-playing has recently been the subject of debate in churches and schools. In particular, the debate has been concerned with the prominence of magic in fantasy role-playing games, and the 'devil-worshipping' connotations of this fascination. Here, Andy Bradbury discusses these charges impassionately, and brings to light the reality of occultism and RPGs.

A CHRISTIAN VIEW

by A.J. Bradbury

'Student dies in maintenance tunnels during real life game of Dungeons and Dragons!'

This story in an American newspaper not only provided the idea for a film but also gave fresh life to claims that role playing games turned normal people into Satanists, or head cases, or both. The only trouble with the story was that it wasn't true - and neither are the anti-RPG claims.

Just to tie up the newspaper story, it seems that the student in question had played D&D a couple of times, but not regularly and never in tunnels beneath the university campus - and niether did anyone else. He had, in truth, been discovered in his room, and his death was almost certainly simple suicide - a fate that unhappily befalls a number of university students throughout the world each and every year.

But let's get back to the real subject of this article- the claim by certain evangelical and/or fundamentalist Christian groups that role playing games can turn you into some kind of monster.

I feel particularly qualified to answer these claims on three counts:

1). I am myself a fundamentalist Christian!

2). I am a graduate with a degree in social psychology!

3). I write articles, scenarios and stories based around Lovecraft's **Cthulhu Mythos** and the works of the English writer **W.H.Hodgson**. And from all three viewpoints I have to say that I can find no basis in fact for the claims set out above.

So why are they made?

Unfortunately, the primary reason is probably ignorance. I say unfortunately because Christians have a better reason than anyone to make sure that they don't pass judgement on others until they're really sure of their facts- namely the biblical instruction:

'Judge not lest you also be judged'.

As a Christian, I do believe in a supernatural personality at work on Earth who is known as Satan. I also believe that much of the evil that is so evident all around the world today is partly due to the influence of Satan. But only in part, for nothing is clearer than the fact that Satan can only exercise his power where human beings open themselves up to that influence.

It's a bit like the old belief that the Vampire could only enter a house if invited to do so by someone already in the house. As far as I have any understanding of these things, it seems quite plain, from what the Bible has to say on the matter, that Satan cannot simply pick someone out of the crowd and say "Right, I'm going to take over that person's life". If he could then one is bound to ask why he doesn't just take over the whole world since that is, from the Christian point of view, what he is trying to do.

But there's a second argument against the idea, and one that is even more relevant to the topic under discussion, namely the concept of free will.

Not long ago there was a news item on TV in which a mother was complaining about the negative effect Fighting Fantasy-type books were having on her son - Nightmares, depression, etc. Yet no-one had forced him to start reading the books, nor was anyone forcing him to go on reading them. It may have made a good news story, but hardly a convincing argument for the abolition of FF books.

It must be admitted, no matter what your beliefs, that some people who play RPGs and FRPGs do get caught up in the occult. And some of them will go nuts to a greater or lesser degree. But that doesn't in itself prove anything.

Our mental hospitals are full of people who don't even know what RPGs are. And I hardly think that real Satanists break off halfway through their rituals for a quick game of D&D or Call of Cthulhu.

The fact is that a direct link between RPG's and occultism or mental illness could only be proved by showing that more people turn to the occult, or suffer some kind of psychological disorder after becoming involved in RPGs than members of the general population. Furthermore, it would have to be shown that anyone so affected was completely well-adjusted, or had no interest whatever in the occult, before beginning to play RPGs. Until someone comes up with that kind of evidence then I for one will continue to view RPGs as being an essentially constructive past-time, for the following reasons:

1). They encourage 'team spirit'

No, I don't mean the old-fashioned, follow the leader and don't ask questions-type of team spirit, but something much more positive where everyone works together without losing their individuality.

2). They encourage creativity.

When I was a school master (boo, hiss!) one thing that really used to bother me was the fact that there was no room on the timetable for lessons that had the sole purpose of teaching students how to think. Everyone's come across the kind of student who regularly gets high marks, but only because they learn everything 'parrot fashion', which has nothing at all to do with real education. RPGs, on the other hand, constantly encourage original thinking - from the GMs who have to make up new problems, and from the players who have to overcome those problems. A good RPG session is like acting in a play without being shown the script in advance. If you want to get through to the end in one piece you've got to think fast and think well - no wonder some schools are actually beginning to use RPGs as part of the curriculum.

3). They deal with reality.

It may sound odd to say that a game like Traveller, CoC, or D&D has anything to do with reality when often players enjoy the games particularly as a chance of getting away from reality - but it's true. It's true because the underlying themes of any scenario must have a basis in reality even though the storyline is about another time and another place. Whether you're in another Galaxy, another Age, or in some fantasy world, the same problems have to be faced as those we find in everyday life: How do you tell good from evil? Do you go for money or for fame & glory? Do you put your own interests first or do you try to work for the good of the group?

In closing, then, I'd like to argue that the average player of RPGs may possibly have a more healthy, saner grasp on life than many of those around him or her. I for one would be a lot more impressed by those who argue against RPGs if they put as much effort into trying to end the nuclear arms race, famine in the third world, etc. etc. etc.

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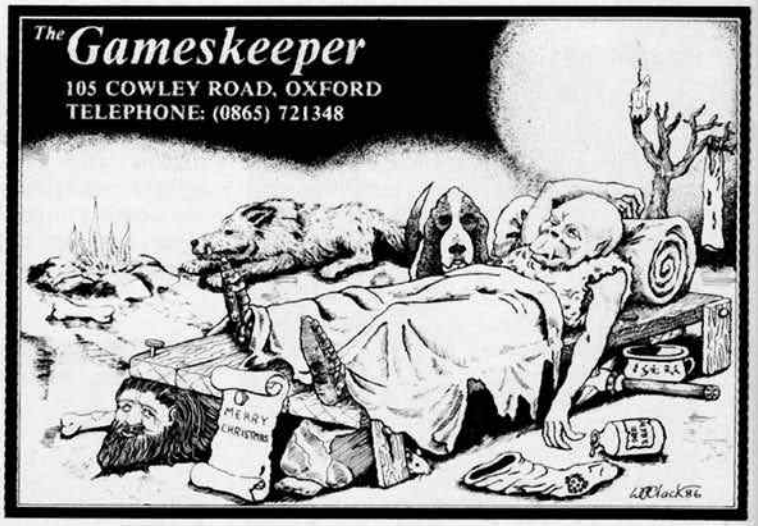

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I KNOW POWER WHEN I SEE IT! Behold! YOU CAN HAVE THIS AND HIM! ALL I ASK IS...
ONE IS TOO STUPID, THE OTHER IS TOO GREEDY
CRACK
Nux! I'LL HAVE TO CONTENT MYSELF WITH A BIT OF MINDLESS VIOLENCE
TOO PIOUS
TOO ADEPT
TOO TRUCULENT
AH! THE IDEAL VESSEL.....
LONESOME HILLS LONESOME HILLS ERK
OH! HEED WHILE I SUMMON THE MUSIC TO CALL UP
THE BREATH-TAKING KISS OF INSATIABLE
SOUNDS LIKE OLD JAY'S GOT A NEWSONG
'BOUT TIME TOO
A BIT NOISY INNIT?
GLUG
SUCK
SLURP
IT SEEMS IS QUITE AT HOME IN THE ONCE BITTEN. I HOPE SHE DOESN'T HURT THE TRADE!
I NEED ANOTHER VENUE! PERHAPS A KIDDIE'S PARTY?
NEXT: THE MELODY LINGERS ON

VOYAGES BEYOND

by Wendy Graham

What's Up Doc?

Well, what did you think of it this year? ***Dr. Who*** I mean? Personally I felt pretty dismayed. It all seemed so shallow, forgettable and inconsistent.

To take the last point first, I'm referring to the last couple of episodes when ***Gallifreyans*** and ***Terrans*** were popping in and out of the Matrix like Jack-in-the- boxes. I didn't think that one could physically get into the matrix, but just to check, and on your behalf, I dug out my tape of ***The Deadly Assassin*** from Tom Baker's time as the Doc and it is established in the story that the Matrix is a sort of computer which stores the electrical patterns of the minds of dying Time Lords and is used to monitor and order events on Gallifrey. The Doctor was the first Time Lord to be permitted access to the Matrix (The **Master** had already done so for his own dastardly purposes) and access to the matrix was via two electrodes placed near the recumbant subject's ears.

In the current story, the Matrix is apparently a new sort of dimension reached by casually popping through one of a number of handy doors, accessible painlessly to anybody, and one enters it *physically*.

Now this may seem like nit-picking but to me it is a sympton of what has happened recently with ***Dr. Who***, for it is just one of many instances of carelessness and sloppiness of production.

Such an inconsistency in a script should have been picked up and corrected - and it could have been fairly easily, with a few minutes at a typewriter, but it seems as though no-one either knew about the Matrix or could be bothered to get the tape from the archives to check.

I checked with the BBC just before writing this and another series is planned, and I hope that there will be a shake-up behind the scenes before production -The shake-up we were promised last year. I am lucky! I have a large collection of **Who** tapes, going right back to ***An Unearthly Child***, and recently I sat down for a couple of weeks and catalogued them, which meant watching each one right through.

It is quite clear from watching that the quality of **Who** has dropped considerably in the last few years in terms of creativity and style. ***Dr. Who*** has slipped to formula and what we see now is a lingering death some regenerations too early.

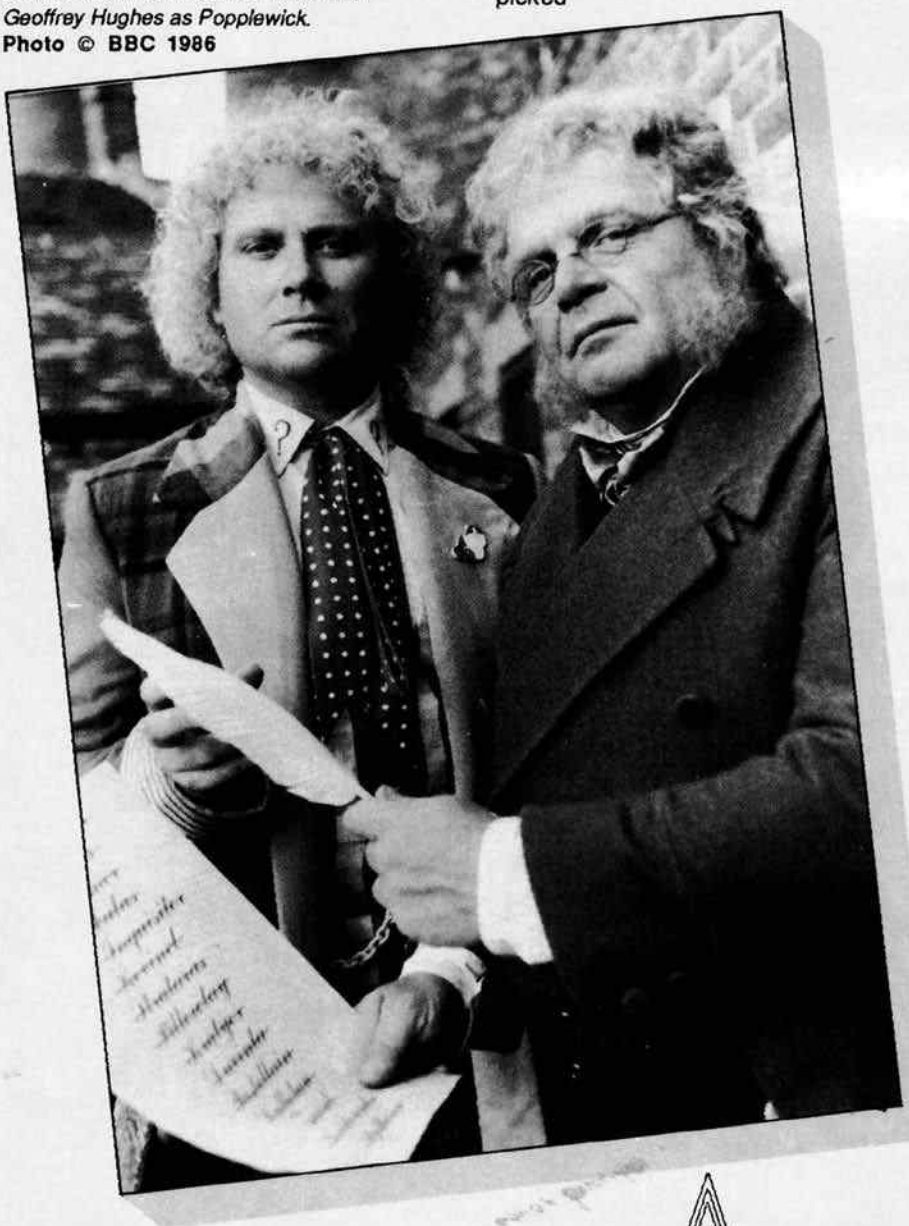
Who has been running for twenty three years now. For most of that time, stories on the whole have been inventive, stylish and creative, but for the past several years, we have had very little that is new - new in the sense of breaking new bounds. The present ***Who*** is not in competition with its past.

This is not the fault of the actors, who are manifestly doing the best they can, nor is it a question of money, for it costs the same to buy a good script as it does a bad one, and more is spent on special effects, costumes, sets and what have you than in days gone by, but this is icing on the cake of a cracking good story, and that is what we haven't had. Costumes, sets, special effects and all the rest were not what **Who** was famous for. **We** loved it in spite of how awful it could be at times. But the scripts were wonderful.

And remember, this view hasn't been arrived at with nostalgia colouring a time-faded and rosied memory. I just watched them all!

I come reluctantly to the view that if this is the best the BBC can do, it is better to finish **Who** now than to watch it die by degrees.

Below: *Colin Baker as the Doctor and Geoffrey Hughes as Popplewick.*
Photo © BBC 1986



Star Cops...

Still with the BBC, ***Star Cops*** is still in production, I still don't like the title, and it should be with us in the second half of this year (1987). It is a ten-parter, set 40 years into the future and is about the new head of the **International Space Force**. The BBC says it is fact not fiction, though how they know that about 40 years hence is beyond me. Perhaps it is another manifestation of the 'we are the BBC, and we know best' attitude

which has taken such a battering at their own hands in the new daytime prog. ***'Open Air'***, where only today, as I type, they announced that the Doctor's granddaughter was called Anne. I'm still waiting for them to ring back about that!

And Space Police?

Don't get confused now, but another new space series we might hopefully be seeing soon is ***Space Police***. This pilot has been produced by someone we all know and many love, **Gerry Anderson**, and is now looking for a transmission home. The pilot episode, which stars **Shane Rimmer**, runs for an hour, with half hour episodes to follow. It is a mixture of live action and Anderson's forte of puppetry. Starring with Rimmer, who voiced Scott Tracy in *Thunderbirds* is **Catherine Cevaller**. I hope to have more on ***Space Police*** next issue.

Hopes of a new ***Thunderbirds*** series have been placed in suspended animation for now, sadly, but for those who thirst for information on any Gerry Anderson's productions, past and present, I recommend a magazine called **SIG**, which is produced by David Nightingale to very high standards and can be obtained from him at: **13 Primrose Avenue, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY4 21J**. David had recently expanded his commitment to SF with the opening of a shop, which he has called (groan) **'Thunderbooks'**. He is building up a good stock of magazines and peripherals, and can probably get you what you want - if he hasn't got it - on one of his trips to London. He doesn't, as such, do small order yet, but if you're anywhere near Blackpool, the shop is worth a visit and is on the bridge at Waterloo Road, in the south of the resort.

Slipping in a bit of book news, the ***Venture SF*** series, which I praised in my last column, is due to re-start in May, with re-designed covers, though personally I thought the old ones were pretty neat.

Superman

Some time ago, Christopher Reeve emulated Sean Connery and said "Never Again" to the cape and visible underwear of Superman. But, just as Connery discovered, never is a short time in the movies; he is back as the Caped Crusader in ***Superman IV***. No finalised release date yet, but the film is just about in post-production. This time the film will have a lot of humour, according to Reeve, who is credited as co-author of the story.

In the ten years (is it really so long) that Reeve has been playing Superman, he has received many letters from children *"Superman crosses all cultures, and I have been able to relate to kids, who never cease to amaze me"* he said;

"I've been KO'd by the courage of children with all kinds of problems, which far exceed those of most adults."

It was this contact with children which sparked off the idea for the story of ***Superman IV***. Reeve did a TV show in the States called ***'A Message to our Parents'***, which was made by 12-year olds, and was about their fear of growing up in this nuclear age.

"I started to think about a child writing to ask Superman why he didn't get rid of all those weapons, which the adults are having so much of a problem dealing with, and it sort of took off from there."

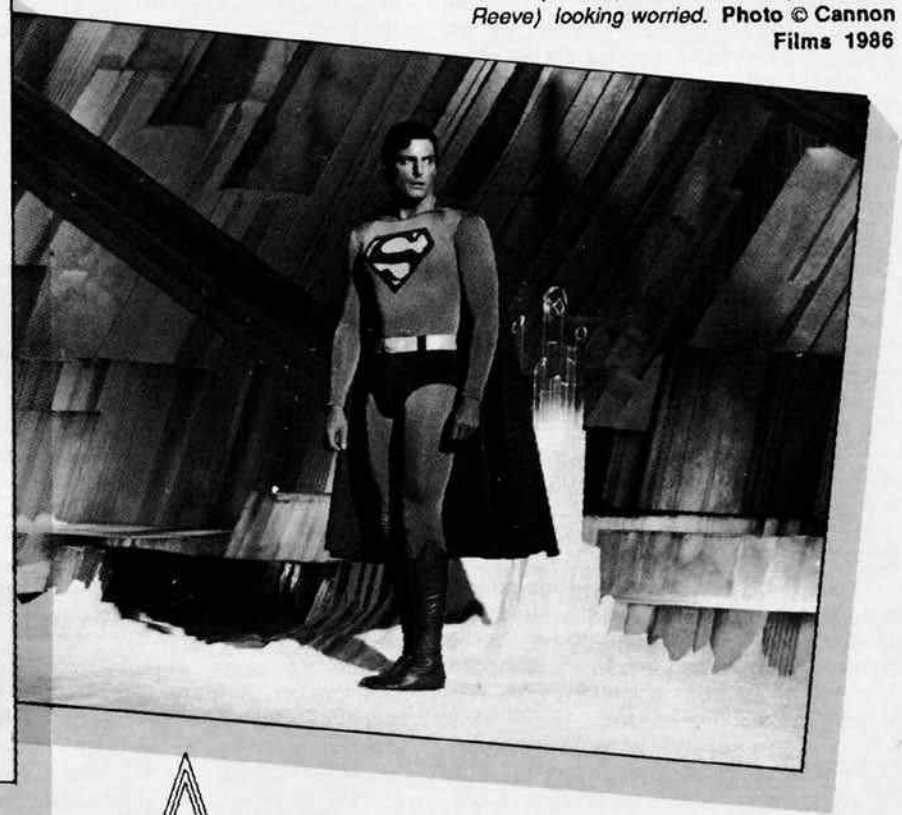
In the film, a child writes to Superman (c/o the **Daily Planet**) asking him that very question, and Superman decides to come off the fence and indeed, do something. The film's preliminary bumph says this is the first time Superman has 'interceded in the destiny of the planet Earth', but I thought every time he saved a life or stopped a volcano or whatever, he was doing just that. Anyway...

Having decided that he will take on new responsibilities for his adoptive home, he finds himself confronted with an *"old and implacable enemy - Lex Luthor - newly sprung from the chain gang, to reappear as a nuclear arms entrepeneur"*. To help him in this altruistic little enterprise, our Lex - ensconced in a cosy secret lair atop the Empire State Building, which appears in the film as the Metropolis Tower (a man can fly and a building can act), has built himself a nuclear man. Incubated in the core of the Sun this latest evilisation can melt iron bars at a touch (so it says).

During the film, which culminates in a duel encircling the globe, Superman finds time to save a stricken Soviet Space Craft, rescue two children from the Eye of a Tornado, rebuild the Great Wall of China, avert a potentially ugly situation in Red Square, bungs up an erupting Mount Etna, survives a battle on the Moon and saves the Statue of Liberty.

Finally, it is interesting, finally to note, that Reeve's own son isn't particularly into Superman - *"He's seen enough to go off it a bit,"* said Reeve, *"he's more into Transformers..."*

Below: *Nuclear Man 2 (Marc Pillon,) sporting an all-over aura.* **Photo © Cannon Films 1986**



Below: *Superman, alias Clark Kent (Christopher Reeve) looking worried.* **Photo © Cannon Films 1986**

Reunion

A mention for ***Emmerdale Farm*** might seem to go amiss in these pages, but it will be of interest to **Who** fans however, for due to be reunited are 'Jamie' - actor Frazer Hines and 'Zoe' - Wendy Padbury.

The pair were together many years ago (I'm sure someone out there can be bothered to work out how long exactly), when they travelled with **Patrick Troughton**, and again for the reunion, birthday special to mark the programmes 20th birthday, ***The Five Doctors*** - when they appeared briefly.

And finally - absolutely nothing to do with SF, though certainly daft enough to be considered fictional science- I pass on this little item, culled from a newspaper.

"A glowing plastic ring, 15 miles in diameter is to be launched into space, to mark the 100th anniversary of the Eiffel tower. The 'ring of light' which will glow in the night sky because of reflected sunlight will be visible for thousands of square miles. It will be rolled up and stowed in the nose cone of a rocket for launching!"

Book Reviews

The Ragged Astronauts - £9.95 (Hardback) - by Bob Shaw.
Published by Gollancz

Oh Robert! that thou hast sunk to a trilogy. This is the first part of same and tells of a world from which the humanoid inhabitants can see its sister as plain as whatever. Faced with a mutative invasion by blobs, which I conceived as being something like the ones which used to roll round Port Meirion in ***The Prisoner***, but which go **phfutt** and kill you as they get near. These bods decide to fly off to aforesaid sister world in balloons (would that be getting to the moon was that easy, or has NASA missed something). Central character is your typical hero type, brains and brawn.

Okay, so that is a glib precis of the story, and I in fact did quite enjoy the book, but I'll reserve judgement until the other two come my way - I'm hoping that the hero turns out to have, well not totally feet of clay, but maybe a few more earthy toenails at least. There is at least a good point to be taken about man messing with the environment.

The Cat who Walks through Walls by Robert A. Heinlein
Published by New English Library
£2.95 - Paperback

This latest from one of the masters is split into three books (what, a trilogy in disguise???) and I'm going to review it in two parts, because I liked very much the first half of the book and didn't go a very large bundle on the second.

This is the seventh book in Heinlein's ***Future History*** sequence and features Richard Ames, writer, traveller and *bon viveur*, with a sense of style somewhat akin to a stroppy John Steed - It's OK to chop off someone's arm if they queue- jump you, but not kill them. In fact the book is sub-titled 'A Comedy of Manners."

The first part of the book indeed lives up to this sub-title, and moves at a lively tempo. But as Ames gets sucked into the Time Corps organisation, much of what's going on gets in a welter of time-travel complications of the 'she's my grandmother's sister's neice's daughter's aunty' type thing.

About the only thing I liked about the second half was the cat, Pixel, of the title. I would suspect that Robert Heinlein, Patrick Moore and I have one thing in common - we have all been adopted by a cat (they do that you know!) And I like my books to have endings.

Time-Slip - £2.95 (Paperback)
by Graham Dunstan Martin
Published by Orion

It is once again post-holocaust. Edinburgh has been spared, and its surviving and partly mutated population, go about their fairly normal business swathed in all-encompassing radiation suits, embracing peculiar and diverse religions.

Into this society one day a random card is thrown in the form of the aptly named Peter Gilchrist, messiah of a new religion where it doesn't really matter if a child is drowned, because he'll survive in another time-stream (no pun intended).

In the way it deals with divergant time streams, this book is similar to Heinlein's above, but while in Heinlein's there are people meddling for what they see as the greater god, in this converts to the new religion cultivate an ability to ignore events which would be envied by the archtypical New Yorker who steps over the body of the man, just shot with ne'er a backward glance.

As an exploration of religion, past, present and probably future, the book does indeed have something to say, but as a novel, it is a 'two and half out of five', for characterisation, it is a 'hit and miss', a bit shallow. The characters are puppets, moved around on very thin strings to further the message.

Trillion Year Spree
£9.95 (Paperback)
by Brian Aldiss & David Wingrove
Published by Gollancz

This is the book that, had I had the chance to review it in the last issue, I would have nominated as the one I would recommend for every SF fan's Christmas list. As it is, you'll have to put it down for a birthday present. It really is a must.

In some 512 pages, the urban and erudite Mr Aldiss traces the development of the written word in SF from its birth, which he pegs at the time of the publication of Mary Shelley's ***Frankenstein***, or ***The Modern Prometheus***, right through to the present day. ***Trillion Year Spree*** is an updated version of the author's ***Billion Year Spree***, and in it I suspect he will annoy many people by not falling in worship at the feet of certain pre-war American magazine editors, and (whisper it behind your hand) he even mentions certain films and TV programmes. Many toes have been trodden on, and a few sacred cows have dried up, but perhaps that is all to the good. This is a serious work of criticism, and one which has been designed not as a genteel and light flip through days gone by, as was Asimov's ***'Asimov on Science Fiction'***. This is a text book on SF, which will take you right back to your 'O' and 'A' level days of English Literature. You have to *work* at reading it, and comprehending, but it will reward anyone who makes the effort. The book closes thusly; 'For SF is in crisis. Where it belongs. This is our prayer for the future: Oh Lord, Make SF perfect- but not quite yet... Exactly.

House of the Wolf by M.K.Wren
(book three of the Phoenix Legacy)
Published by New English Library
£2.95 - Paperback

This concluding third of the Phoenix Legacy is billed on the cover as 'A New Classic!' It has the sweep and power of Asimov's ***'Foundation Trilogy'***.

'Egad', you cry, and swiftly buy. Well, don't get too excited. Like most trilogies these days, it is an okay story flogged to death, with rather drippy characters leaping about loving or dying, rebelling or being dastardly and double-crossing. And the hero is too good to be true. When I got this book, I had to check in my library to discover that I had indeed read the first two, and as for this one - I read it a couple of days before writing this and had to flip through the book to remind myself what it was about. Get the idea?

City of Sorcery - A Darkover novel
by Marion Zimmer Bradley
Published by Arrow
£2.95 - Paperback

In contrast to the above, I soon slipped back to the planet of Darkover, knowing I had read other stories of life on that mysterious planet and, within a few pages, the pertinent memory cells had fired to remind me of what had gone before.

There is something very brooding and... well, dark - for want of a better word - about Darkover, as a place to live. It isn't just that the weather seems to be even worse than that we in Britain have been having in the last few years. It is the feeling that sometime in the future, something is going to go whoosh, turn the planet inside out and there will be light, internal and external for both Terrans and Darkovans. Meantimes, they don't have very happy lives, though that isn't for the want of trying, in most cases.

That comment would seem to give the hint that I don't enjoy reading any of these novels. I do, it is just that, that is the impression with which I am left.... hoping that Marion Zimmer Bradley will, someday, wave her magic pen and sort everything out for all these women. They deserve it.

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FOR SCIENCE FICTION RPGs

BIG TROUBLE —On A Little Planet—

BY A.J. BRADBURY

MODULE 1
Introduction

This scenario is designed for use with any of the leading SFRPG'S - *Traveller, Star Trek, Space Opera, Star Frontiers,* etc., though this isn't the only reason why no player stats are included. To judge by some of the letters appearing in the leading RPG magazines, many Referees and GMs are still locked into a mental straightjacket which makes them try to run any printed game straight off the page - which is a big mistake - or to reject such scenarios because they don't fit into the current game (which is just as daft).

Although the scenario produced here is complete within itself, it is designed to be a **source** of ideas rather than a finished unit, and is particulary unsuitable for 'unedited use', so to speak. On the contrary, anyone wishing to use this material is strongly advised to read through the entire text before (a) making any and all additions/deletions he/she thinks necessary, and (b) rolling up character points which will tailor the scenario to the preferrred game and style of play, and the experience of his/her players. This scenario should ONLY be read by referees - NOT by players.

And now, having got those few thoughts off my chest, let the action commence.

It is assumed that the PCs will start the adventure either on a rest planet or on a relatively unimportant interstellar flight. They will be contacted by 'Headquarters' (which will vary from game to game, of course) and ordered to report as quickly as possible for an urgent briefing.

MODULE 2
The Briefing (1)

Once the players have been gathered together, they will be asked to take a single spacecraft out in order to act as a guard of honour for an interstellar 'schooner' which is bringing in an ambassador from an important outer planet. They will be warned of only two possible sources of trouble attached to this mission:

(1) The ambassador, from one of the outer worlds, is known to be an inveterate tourist. That is to say, there is nothing he likes less than simply travelling directly from point A to point B without making at least half a dozen stops along the way. The players are warned that they must not allow this at any cost, as the ambassador is due to address a crucially important meeting on a fixed date. This meeting cannot be postponed - except under very exceptional cicumstances - without causing serious political upheavals.

Note:

The need to deliver the ambassador to his destination on time is actually only one small part of the mission - as we will soon see. Still, the importance of carrying out this small task successfully (and without offending the ambassador, of course) is all that should be impressed upon the players for the moment - so as to catch them off guard when the real action starts.

(2) A second reason for keeping the ambassador on course is concerned with a newly discovered planet which lies not far off of his flight path. The Federation / Imperium / or whoever are currently negotiating with some of the more enlightened leaders on the planet in order to be allowed to mine a portion of its rich minerial deposits. These negotiations are very close to completion, but full consideration has to be given to the people of this new world - a strange and superstitious race who call themselves the URTHYKNOI. Sudden visits - by anyone - could set the whole process back for years.

The Briefing (2)

A complete rundown on the URTHYKNOI (pronounced ER - **THICK** - NOY) is still not available. Existing list of facts is as follows:

(1) The **URTHYKNOI** people are on the small side compared with human beings - the average height is just under five feet, when they stand on their hind legs, or about three feet from ears to the ground when they're 'on all six'.

(2) As the last note suggests, the **URTHYKNOI** have six legs positioned at the shoulder, waist and hip. The front legs double as arms, though they show a fair amount of dexterity in their feet as well. The middle pair of legs seem originally to have served the sole purpose of supporting immature youngsters during travel. As they have progressed, technically, a split has appeared between those who regard these arms as obsolete (and refuse to use them for anything except their original purpose - or not at all), and those who see them as an adaptive bonus and who have learned to use them as a second pair of arms.

(3) The seemingly trivial question of what to do with their central pair of arms is actually a central feature of URTHYKNOI life - not least because the main political parties are identified by their attitude towards this question. The more progressive faction (the people who are willing to negotiate for the mineral rights) support the use of all six limbs and are therefore known as the 'sixers'. Their opponents, not surprisingly, are known as the 'four only' party (both names are only rough translations from the original 'high Urthyknoi' language, of course).

(4) Those members of the four only who are known to be aware of the negotiations haven't shown much enthusiasm for the project - but neither have they openly opposed it. It is essential that any dealings with the Urthyknoi take this situation into account and that everything (within reason) is done to avoid antagonising the members of the 'four only'.

(5) Whilst there is no single religion shared by all of the Urthyknoi, it is known that many 'four only' supporters also belong to the **'wind from beyond'** cult (again this is only a rough translation of the original title).

Followers of 'wind from beyond' share certain ideas found in the polynesian 'cargo cults' here on earth. For example, whilst no visitor has been openly attacked, Urthyknoi cult members have made clear their contempt for the visitors from the federation/imperium/etc. by refusing to meet with them or accept any tokens of goodwill (ie. diplomatic bribes).

The attitude of the cultists has intrigued the two or three anthropologists who have been allowed to make brief visits to the planet because it seems to be completely at odds with one of their central beliefs: That 'He who was sent' will come on the 'Winds from beyond' with many men and with many gifts for the Urthyknoi who have faithfully worshipped him. The only member of the Urthyknoi who ever openly commented on this point simply insisted that: *"The true 'He who was sent' will make himself known beyond doubt when he comes".*

(6) The Urthyknoi are known to have certain, limited, telepathic powers, though their exact nature isn't known.

MODULE 3
The Mission - Part 1

The players should be expecting to meet up with the ambassador's space

schooner shortly after it passes Greyp (pronounced Gree-lp) the home planet of the Urthyknoi. In fact they will intercept a mayday call from the Ambassadorial craft several hours before they reach the rendezvous.

The call will make it clear that the ship is about to make a landing on Greyp, but everything else is hopelessly garbled. Even if a recording of the message is re-run with computer enhancement, etc., it will not be possible to tell why the ship is being forced to land or whether the Captain is expecting to make a regular landing or a crash landing. Fortunately, the downed ship is carrying a rescue beacon, operated on one of the regular emergency channels.

Locating the ship, once they reach Greyp, shouldn't present any difficulties for the players. The big question, of course, is: having found the ship, how should they go about rescuing the ambassador and his crew? If the players don't see this as much of a problem, the referee should emphasise the delicate nature of the investigations, and the fact that the appearance of two alien spacecraft in quick succession, might well be interpreted by the xenophobic members of the population as something closely resembling an invasion! At this point, the players might feel that their best bet is to contact HQ for instructions as to how they should proceed. This action will turn out to be an extremely bad idea, as it will hasten the onset of the events described in Module 7.

If on the other hand, the players decide to save time by sending down a search party immediately, they will walk straight into the situation described in Module 4.

MODULE 4
At Home with the Urthyknoi

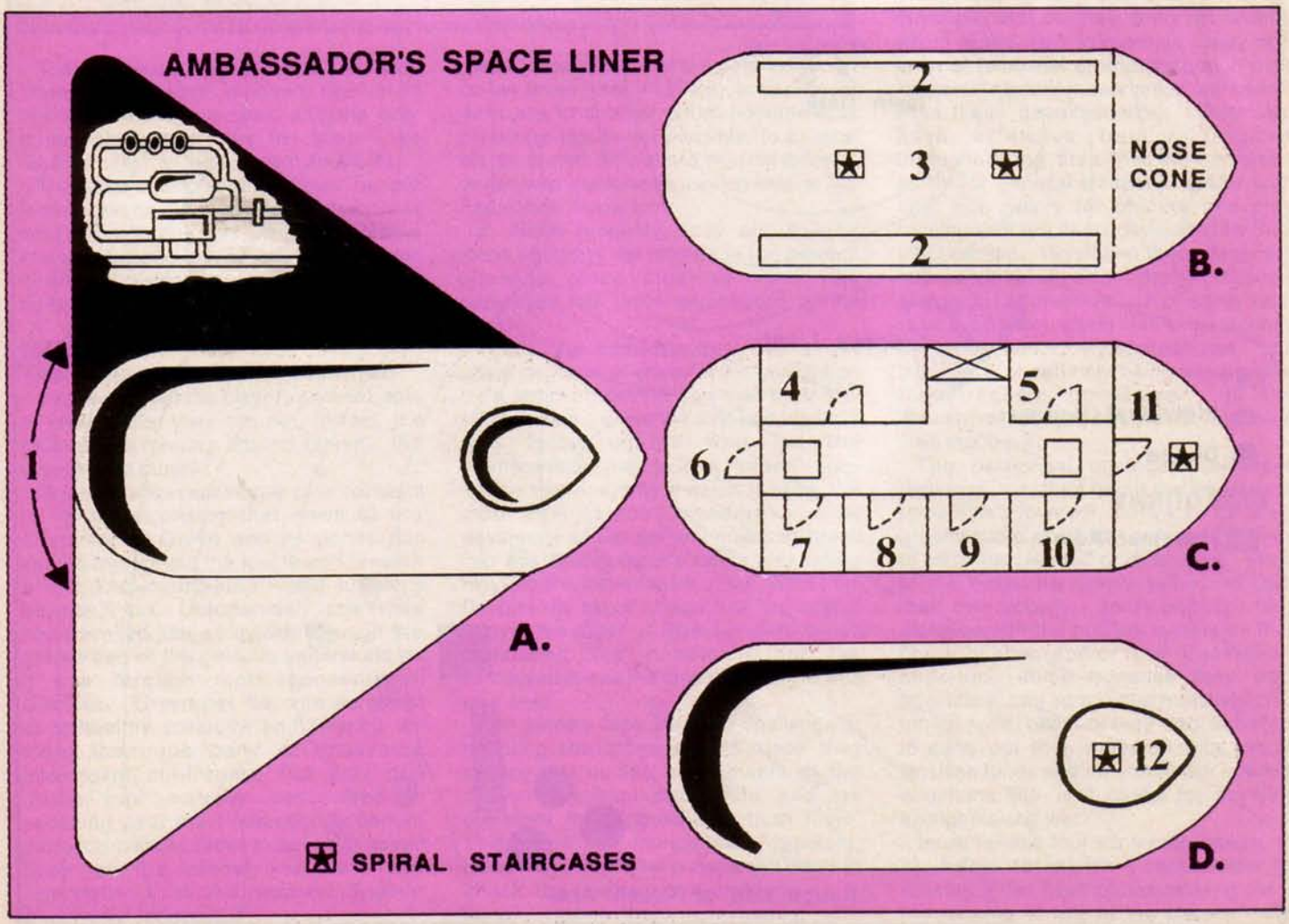
The ambassadorial spacecraft has landed approximately half a mile north of a small town. The town itself consists primarily of rows of dwellings built into the many banks and small hillsides in the area - a method of construction which leaves half of the habitation effectively underground, and half sticking out from the line of the slope with something that looks vaguely like a thatched roof. If the landing party set down close to the town, they will immediately be surrounded by the local population, who will try to drag them off to the regional governor - who lives 5-6 miles away in the opposite direction from the downed ship.

Close observation of the Urthyknoi, and a bit of logical thought, will enable any of the players to spot that all the creatures have thin, almost hairless arms at 'waist' level, which almost certainly means that they must be supporters of the 'four only' school. This in turn, should suggest that there is a fair chance that they a) don't like outsiders, and b) are probably very superstitious. On either, or both counts, they obviously need to be handled with great tact in order to avoid what could blow up into a major incident.

In this situation, the players' best move is to accompany the Urthyknoi voluntarily to the regional governor's home where they will be dealt with more sympathetically. If, on the other hand, the players try to resist - and especially if they try to use weapons of any sort - the Urthyknoi will swiftly disable them with implements not totally unlike electrical cattle prods. The effect of these implements is to temporarily scramble the central nervous system, thus causing the victim to collapse in a helpless heap. These effects are short-lived (10-15 minutes depending on size, weight, constitution, etc.) and, though unpleasant, have no serious side-effects for a normally healthy person.

Either way then, if the players enter the Urthyknoi town, they will end up visiting the regional governor. The big difference is that, if the players resist the invitation to visit the governor, then they will be taken to him in chains, and he will be far less helpful than if they go there voluntarily.

If on the other hand, the landing party sets down close to the ambassadorial craft, they will find that the ship is totally undamaged - it has made a near-perfect landing on the reasonably smooth, though unprepared landing site. Unfortunately, there is no sign of the ambassador, his staff, or the crew, and no clue as to where they have gone. (A diagram of the ship and a map of the landing area and village are given in module 5.) The landing party can either return to their ship, or move to the nearby town - with the results described above.



MODULE 5

Ambassador's Space Schooner and Forced Landing Area The Space Liner

The four illustrations show; an aerial view, with detail of one wing-mounted drive (a); the storage deck (b); the main passenger deck (c) and the upper deck navigation area (d). The numbered areas are as follows:

A1). Two wing-mounted star drives.
B2). Fuel holders (Approx. half empty).
B3). General storage area. Note the two spiral staircases leading to the main deck. Entrance to this area is made through the hinged nose section.
C4). Ambassador's Quarters.
C5). Captain's Quarters.
C6). Crew's recreation area.
C7 & C8). Crew's quarters.
C9 & C10). Ambassador's staff quarters.
C11). Ambassador's work/leisure area.
D12). Navigation Deck - room for Captain or first officer and three crew members at any one time.

MODULE 6

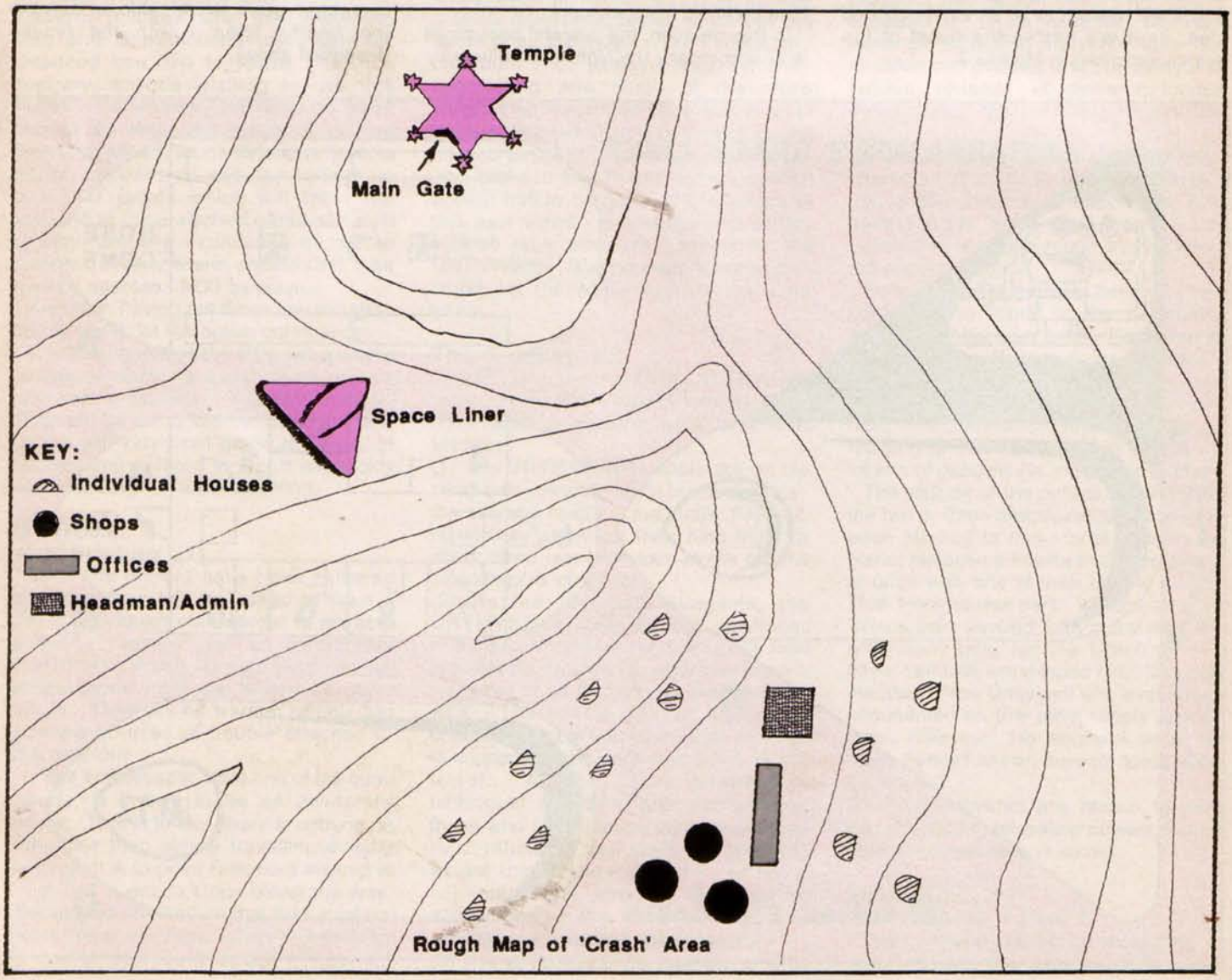
The 'Wind from Beyond' Temple

When the players are eventually brought before the Regional Governor, and assuming that they haven't antagonised everyone in sight, they will learn that the anbassador's staff and crew have already arrived in the regional capital - but not the Ambassador. It seems that the local headman, who is also a priest of the 'Wind from Beyond' cult, has decided that the ambassador is, in fact, 'He who was sent', and has had him taken off to the nearby 'wind from beyond' temple to await the arrival of the High Priest from the cult's main temple.

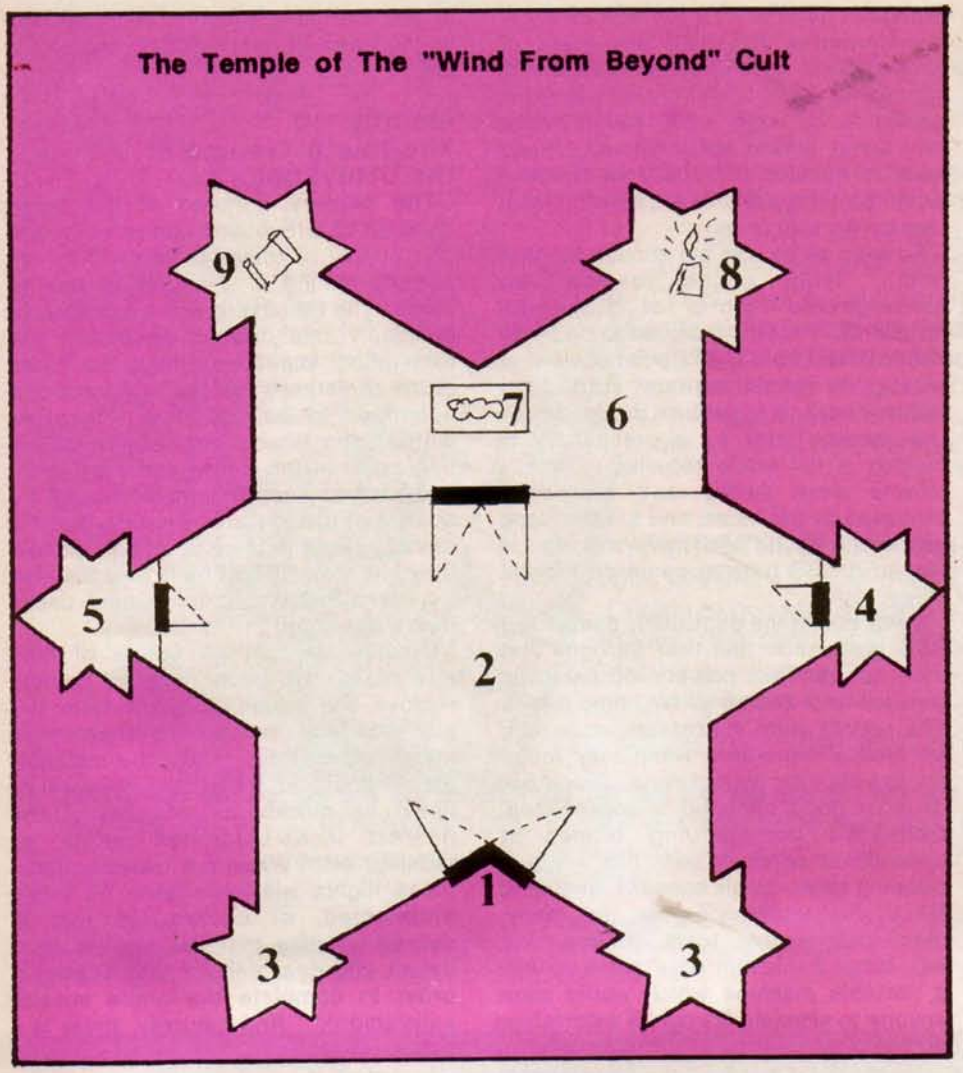
The inner section of the temple is regarded as absolutely sacrosanct, and whilst strangers might be permitted in the outer court, any attempt by the players to go further will meet the total resistance by the Urthyknoi (who would rather die than see their temple desecrated). The ambassador is actually suffering from severe shock and is very unlikely to try to escape from the alcove on the left of the high altar, where he has been made to sit in the ritual 'throne', a standard feature of all 'wind from beyond' temples (reserved, of course, for 'He who was sent'.)

By the way, in case someone gets the idea of making a back 'door' assault on the temple to catch the Urthyknoi off guard - there is no back door, and no back windows either. The temple is - as befits such a rural area - comparitively spartan. It is built of something that resembles 'wattle and daub' or dwellings. It follows the traditional pattern, but not with the exactness seen in the stone temples in the cities, and some larger towns. The sections of the temple are as follows:

(1) **The Main Gate** - about eight feet high and six feet across the face of each gate. The gates are kept closed at all times (except on the three special days celebrated by the cult members each year), but they are only locked at night, and only then if no-one is on duty.
(2) **The Outer Court** - a grassed-over area with stone-flagged paths leading to the inner temple. the public rooms and the two 'offices'.
(3) **Public Rooms** - it is impossible to explain the exact purpose of these rooms without entering into a full blown description of the rituals of the 'wind from beyond' cult. Suffice it to say that quite a number of the townspeople will be moving in and out of these rooms as long as, and whenever the temple is open.
(4) **Priest's Room** - for all practical purposes, this room can be seen as the equivalent of the vestry in an English church.
(5) **Guard Room** - this room is used by all of the officials of the temple, in fact, including half a dozen guards. Only two guards will be present at any given time as they work a shift system.
(6) **The Inner Temple**
(7) **The High Altar** is a plain stone block above which hovers a small cloud-like object which signifies the unknown 'Beyond' from which 'He who was sent ' will come.



Rough Map of 'Crash' Area



The temple is always in semi-darkness. There are four small windows, high up on the wall behind the altar, and the only other light comes from the lamp - the 'Eternal Lamp' in the alcove marked (8)

The second alcove in the Inner Temple is occupied by the Throne of "He who was sent'. This 'throne ' (9) - little more than a straight -backed chair made of iron-wood and Beethp-skin - is presently occupied by the kidnapped Ambassador.

MODULE 7
The Mission - A Complication

Sooner or later the players should begin to realise that they are not, in fact, the only aliens running around Greyp. But who are the others?

Given its abundant supply of minerals, it is hardly surprising that news of the discovery of Greyp and its riches has spread throughout the length and breadth of the known universe - and probably beyond it too. Unfortunately, this news has travelled just as quickly through the grapevines of the galactic underworld as it has through more conventional channels. Greyp has become an object of unhealthy curiosity and avarice for more than one band of unsavoury interstellar cut-throats, but only one group has actually succeeded in sneaking past the Federation/Imperium patrol cruisers in order to set up a covert base on the planet surface - the *Intersteller Craft Appreciation Society* (the 'Incas' for short).

As can be seen from the detailed report on the Incas (see module 8), their primary aims are to subvert entire governments or, where this is not possible, to at least stir up armed revolutions against governments who insist on remaining loyal to the Federation /Imperium.

In some respects, they are several steps ahead of the players in the present situation since most of what has happened has been engineered by the Incas.

Firstly, the ambassadorial was forced down because of drive failure brought on by a jamming device invented by Incas' R&D section . Once the ship had landed it was Incas agents who led the townspeople out to the 'crash' site. These same agents - whilst leading the mob against the 'Invaders' - took advantage of the general chaos to break into the ambassador's cabin and tattoo him with the sacred mark of the 'Wind from Beyond' (a cloud shape like the object above the altar in the temple) which convinced the headman that the ambassador was the long awaited 'He who was sent'.

The players face a unique challenge in handling the Incas agents since they occupy the bodies of members of the native Urthyknoi population and are therefore indistinguishable from them. This is not an immpossible problem, however, though the players will need to attack the 'root' of the problem, so to speak, rather than just dealing with symptoms. Naturally the Incas agents will hold those positions which will do tham the most good - as guards at the 'Wind from Beyond' temple, for example. As long as they survive, there is NO way that the players can hope to reach the ambassador to save him. Once the agents have been removed, however, if players can reach the ambassador without causing a general free-for-all in the process then they should be able to remove the tattoo without too much difficulty, thus removing the biggest barrier to the successful completion of their mission.

MODULE 8
The Incas

The Incas title is, of course, intentially misleading - though not entirely so. The purpose of the organisation is to subvert the governments of the planets within the Federation / Imperium on a gradual basis, at the same time setting up a rival confederation headed by the Incas. The title of the society is designed to divert suspicion from their true purpose when, as they frequently do, they visit the many 'less advanced' planets - supposedly in order to trade for hand - made goods, works of art, etc. to be sold on the richer, inner planets.

Naturally the Incas do buy and sell craft to maintain their cover, but most of their journeys are primarily concerned with placing agents, arranging secret negotiations, arms smuggling and the like.

The Incas already control several of the outer planets, so they enjoy an income which allows them to maintain a very high level of technical progress (though their 'subjects' seldom if ever enjoy any benefit from these developments). They also have extensive training facilities throughout the area that they control - partly for general weapons/ space craft drill, but mainly for officers and men training with the items developed by their R&D section. Very often these items are not weapons, as such, though they are always for aggressive use of some kind. One such item which has only recently been released for widespread use - and one which is certainly being used by the Incas agents on Greyp - is the **'Personal Displacement'** machine (see module 9).

The personnel of Incas has been recruited from throughout the Federation/ Imperium. However, unlike some other organisations, it is not composed entirely of criminals (wanted or otherwise). Many of the Incas are simply self-exiles from their own society - some because they disagree with the political system on their home planet and/or the Federation/ Imperium, some because they want adventure, and some (of a more scientific turn of mind) because they want to be free to carry out their research with almost limitless funds and no one to ask irritating questions like 'is it useful for anything except making war?'

Incas fall into four main categories:

a). **Administration** - responsible for running Incas itself plus supplying aid in the running of any of the planets under

their control. The decision to 'aid' an Incas-controlled planet rests with the admin. branch - Not the people of the planet in question.

b). **Research & Development** - this branch is responsible both for devising/making/ testing and supplying new items, and for the maintenance of all existing equipment throughout the Incas organisation.

c). **Combat** - the armed branch of Incas aids R&D in testing new weaponry, as well as using it whenever necessary to enforce Inca's power. Combat is primarily concerned with straight-forward 'conventional'/ physical operations, though it does occasional work with and/support operations mounted by 'Special Services'.

d). **Specialised Scanning Services** - the last and most secretive branch of Incas. The SSS branch fields all of Incas' spies and agents (ie. spies work in unfriendly territory, agents work in neutral or friendly territory.) The senior members of the SSS are constantly on the look out for new recruits with unusual powers. It was one such recruit who gave R&D the idea for the personnel displacement machine.

Finally, whatever their motives for joining Incas, its members will have been steadily (and completely without their knowledge or consent) brainwashed in order to instill perfect loyalty to the organisation. This knowledge, should it ever leak out, would be very upsetting (to put it mildly) for many members of the organisation - possibly even leading them to desert. It should be pointed out, however, that like all efficient brain-washing, the treatment includes instruction to the effect that the victims should never believe that they have been brainwashed. So, if the players want to 'turn' one of the Incas, they will have to do more than just grab one of the enemy and explain that he/she has been indoctrinated.

Module 9
The 'Personal Displacement' Machine

The notion of building a 'personal displacement' machine came as a result of the recruitment into 'specialised services' of a young Malathurk (the secondary race of the planet, Aerabius IXg) named **Iyubi Sarognii.**

For some strange reason (no amount of research has yet discovered anything as simple as a straightforward genetic cause), the Malathurks occasionally produce a youngster who shows some degree of ability towards 'personal displacement' (ie, the ability to transfer one's personality into another body). In some cases, this ability fades away as the young Malathurk grows towards maturity, in others the ability can only be applied to individuals from Aerabius IXg (of any race). But once in a while - a very long while - a Malathurk comes along who can transfer him/herself into, and dominate, any other sentient being within range. Iyubi Sarognii was the first Malathurk to show the ultimate degree of displacement ability in six generations.

Sarognii's parents, only too well aware of the Vartiera's dislike of any signs of undue talent amongst the Malathurks, concealed Iyubi's skill from everyone except an old sage, who, though having only a very limited ability himself, helped Iyubi to develop his ability as far as it would go (The Vartiera are the dominant race on Aerabius IXg.)

As soon as he was old enough to leave home, Iyubi chose to join an 'underground' group of Malathurk dissidents. His timing proved to be pretty near perfect (from Iyubi's point of view, at least), as Incas agents started to infiltrate various Malathurk groups only a few months later as a preliminary to inciting a full scale rebellion. Iyubi's talents were swiftly and accurately assessed by the Incas, and it wasn't long before the young Malathurk was on his way to a SSS training camp on Piograt Minor.

It was during the particularly demanding SSS graduation test that Sarognii first tried to use his powers of personal displacement away from his home planet. The results were impressive, especially for Iyubi's instructors when they found out exactly what he had done. Never one to let a good thing go unappreciated, Sarognii's commanding officer at specialised services sent him - wih a covering letter - to his opposite number at R&D. Just under one year, and many, many experimants, tests, dummy runs, etc., Incas 'backroom boys' came up with a portable machine which would allow anyone to simulate Sarognii's astonishing ability.

There will be at least three Incas agents (using Urthyknoi bodies) in the vicinity of the town and/or the temple at any one time, with an Incas ship within radio distance at all times. The Incas agents are, of course, making use of the personal displacement machine - and are therefore subject to one major limitation - they cannot move more than 9.76 Trossards (equal to 3 Earth Miles) away from the place where their original bodies are being stored, during the period of displacement. If they go even a few yards beyond this limit, the host body will become progressively weaker as the Incas invader loses strength. After approximately 25-35 minutes outside the communication limit, the Incas invader will lose all power and die - a couple of minutes later, the host's body will be restored to its normal state, but with no knowledge or memory of the invasion it has suffered (but the players won't necessarily know about that!) The players have little or no chance of distinguishing the invaded Urthyknoi from their normal colleagues, so the Incas agents can only be incapacitated by finding their real bodies. These can be hidden (in their pale grey, tubular storage capsules) anywhere the referee chooses, given that they are unlikely to be more than three miles away from either the town or the temple.

Incidentally, whilst the Urthyknoi, being a low-tech society, are unlikely to find the Incas' Storage Capsules - let alone damage them - one of the agents will almost certainly (as a matter of policy) try to visit the hiding place at every second or third day to check that everything is OK.

Module 10
The Death Trauma of the Urthyknoi

The primary purpose of the Incas invasion of Greyp was motivated by the rich supply of minerals which they are already mining in a couple of remote areas. The kidnapping of the ambassador is simply intended to discomfort the Federation/ Imperium through the failure of the conference that the ambassador is supposed to be attending. In other words, the Incas aren't particularly interested in the ambassador as such, and have no plans to harm him except if a change of circumstances means that it is advantageous to them to do so. Indeed, they feel strongly that he is best left alive - a living **'P.O.W.'** is much more useful than a dead one!

Despite the limited scope of their operations, the Incas must, of course, remove the mined minerals from the planet surface - probably by 'short range' matter transmitters. Once the materials are on board an Incas ship, they will be flown as quickly as possible to the nearest Incas-controlled planet for refining, etc. When the mission starts, these flights will have gone on totally undetected, of course, so this is something else thst the players must detect and deal with for themselves, in order to complete the entire mission satisfactorily. And naturally, there is a catch.

In anticipation of the moment of the discovery, the Incas transporters carry half a dozen kidnapped Urthyknoi each - including the son of the headman of the town where the ambassador's space schooner set down. These hostages aren't really aware of what they are being used for - they are literally just going along for the ride. Any attempt to interface with an Incas ship will be met with a message concerning the presence of the Urthyknoi. In case any of the players take the attitude that a few Urthyknoi more or less isn't going to make much difference one way or t'other - especially when they are to die far from their own planet and with no-one on Greyp any the wiser - the Incas will, if pushed, supply a second piece of information.

From what the Incas say (and they are, in fact, telling the truth) every member of the Urthyknoi race has the gift of thought transference - but only at the moment of death! This ability - known as the 'Death Trauma of the Urthyknoi' - means that they can transmit a thought picture in great detail and clarity for just a few seconds at the moment of death, and over the vast distances to be received by a special sub-committee of the High Council of Greyp. So, if an Incas ship is attacked and damaged or destroyed by the players, then, if only one Urthyknoi is killed as a result of that attack, it will certainly pass that information back to the High Council of Greyp - and bang go any chances of signing a peace and trade treaty!

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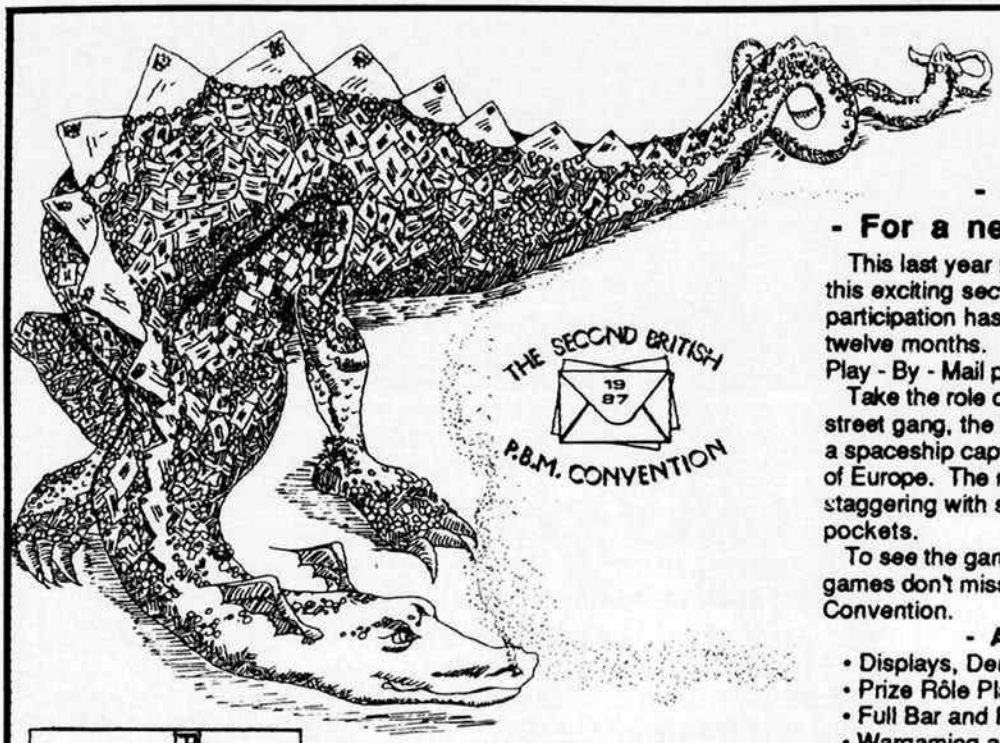

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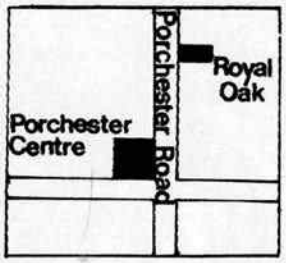

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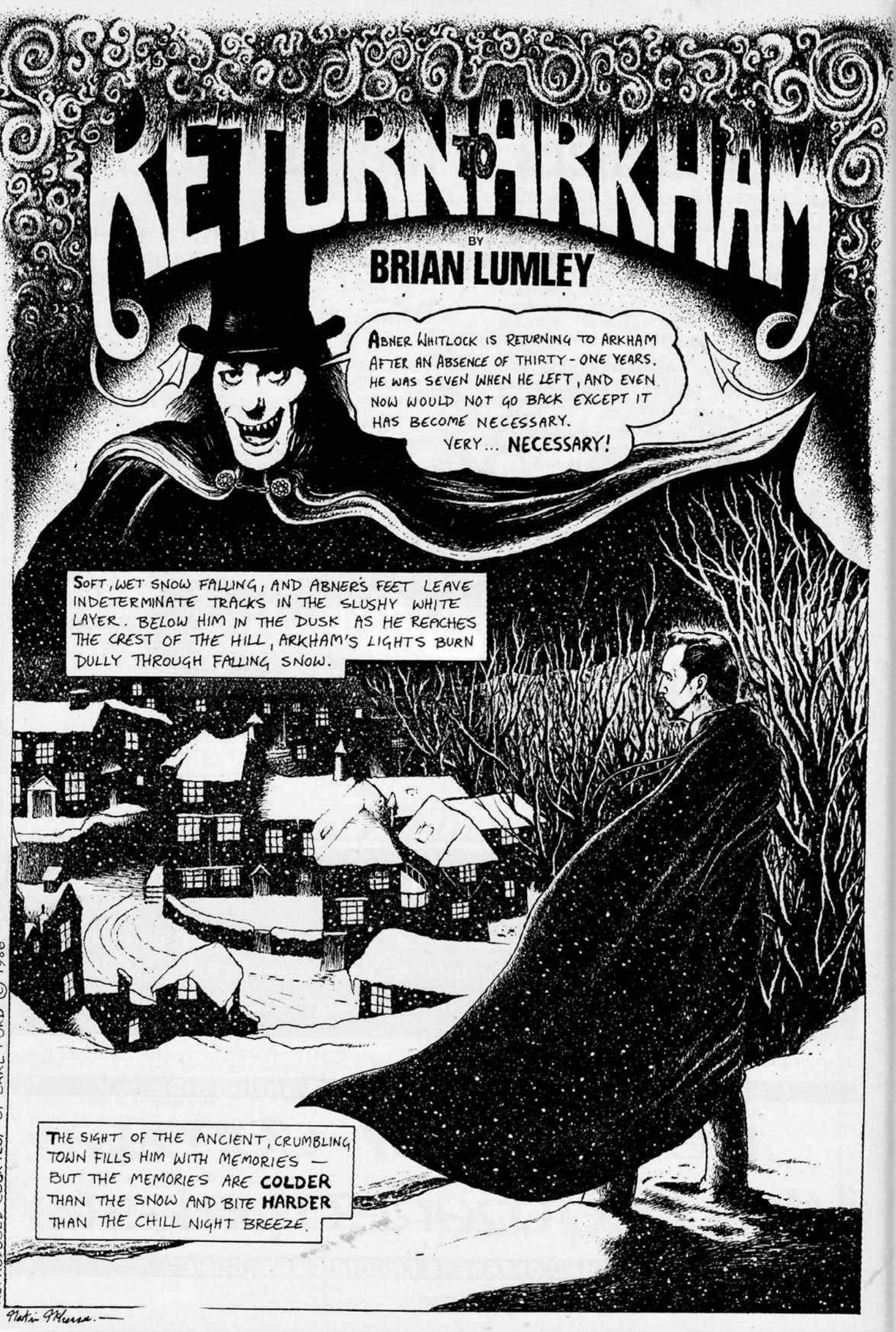
TRADE AND OVERSEAS ENQUIRIES WELCOME

RETURN TO ARKHAM

BY

BRIAN LUMLEY


ABNER WHITLOCK IS RETURNING TO ARKHAM AFTER AN ABSENCE OF THIRTY-ONE YEARS. HE WAS SEVEN WHEN HE LEFT, AND EVEN NOW WOULD NOT GO BACK EXCEPT IT HAS BECOME NECESSARY. VERY... NECESSARY!
SOFT, WET SNOW FALLING, AND ABNER'S FEET LEAVE INDETERMINATE TRACKS IN THE SLUSHY WHITE LAYER. BELOW HIM IN THE DUSK AS HE REACHES THE CREST OF THE HILL, ARKHAM'S LIGHTS BURN DULLY THROUGH FALLING SNOW.
THE SIGHT OF THE ANCIENT, CRUMBLING TOWN FILLS HIM WITH MEMORIES — BUT THE MEMORIES ARE COLDER THAN THE SNOW AND BITE HARDER THAN THE CHILL NIGHT BREEZE.

THIS FEATURE FIRST APPEARED IN DAGON NO. 15.
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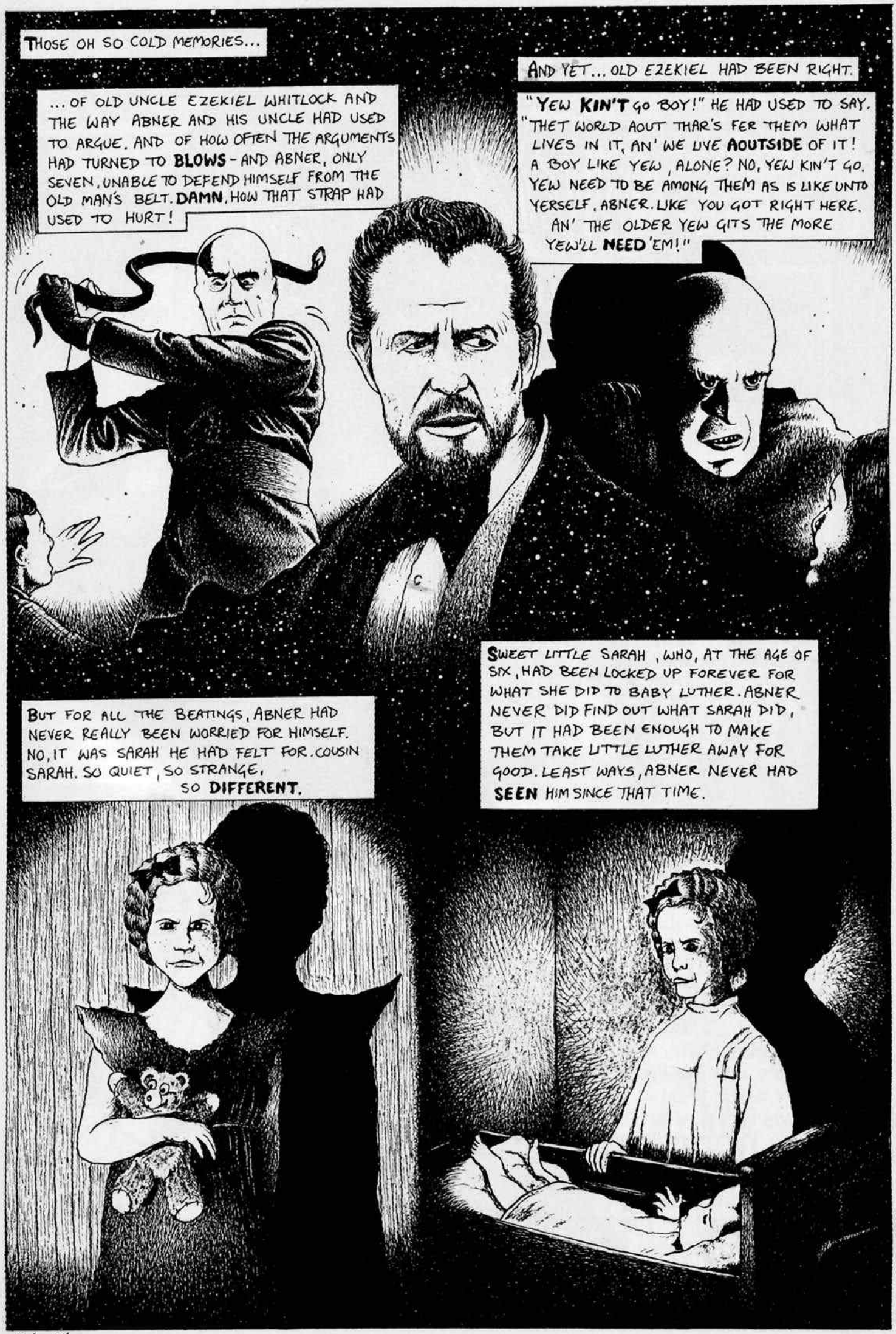

THOSE OH SO COLD MEMORIES...
...OF OLD UNCLE EZEKIEL WHITLOCK AND THE WAY ABNER AND HIS UNCLE HAD USED TO ARGUE. AND OF HOW OFTEN THE ARGUMENTS HAD TURNED TO **BLOWS** - AND ABNER, ONLY SEVEN, UNABLE TO DEFEND HIMSELF FROM THE OLD MAN'S BELT. **DAMN**, HOW THAT STRAP HAD USED TO HURT!
AND YET... OLD EZEKIEL HAD BEEN RIGHT.
"YEW **KIN'T** GO BOY!" HE HAD USED TO SAY. "THET WORLD AOUT THAR'S FER THEM WHAT LIVES IN IT, AN' WE LIVE **AOUTSIDE** OF IT! A BOY LIKE YEW, ALONE? NO, YEW KIN'T GO. YEW NEED TO BE AMONG THEM AS IS LIKE UNTO YERSELF, ABNER. LIKE YOU GOT RIGHT HERE. AN' THE OLDER YEW GITS THE MORE YEW'LL **NEED** 'EM!"
BUT FOR ALL THE BEATINGS, ABNER HAD NEVER REALLY BEEN WORRIED FOR HIMSELF. NO, IT WAS SARAH HE HAD FELT FOR. COUSIN SARAH. SO QUIET, SO STRANGE, SO **DIFFERENT**.
SWEET LITTLE SARAH, WHO, AT THE AGE OF SIX, HAD BEEN LOCKED UP FOREVER FOR WHAT SHE DID TO BABY LUTHER. ABNER NEVER DID FIND OUT WHAT SARAH DID, BUT IT HAD BEEN ENOUGH TO MAKE THEM TAKE LITTLE LUTHER AWAY FOR GOOD. LEAST WAYS, ABNER NEVER HAD **SEEN** HIM SINCE THAT TIME.

NOW, DESCENDING THE HILL, ABNER SKIRTS OLD ARKHAM AND HEADS FOR THE WOODS WEST OF TOWN. IN THE CENTRE OF THAT FOREST, THERE STANDS THE OLD WHITLOCK MANSION, FORBIDDING MONUMENT TO EXTINCT NOBILITY, DECAYING NOW AND DEGENERATE AS THE FAMILY NAME IT BEARS.
HE GRINS MIRTHLESSLY AS HE TURNS UP THE COLLAR OF HIS COAT, AND ONCE AGAIN HIS MEMORIES GO BACK, BACK...
AND LORD OVER THEM ALL, UNCLE EZEKIEL, THE HARD OLD BASTARD!
HE HAD BEEN ONE OF THE OLDEST. HE'D NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY THERE WERE SO MANY CHILDREN. AND ALL OF THEM WHITLOCKS.
INBRED - IDIOCY BREEDING IDIOCY - BUT SO FEW ADULTS. COUSINS AND HALF-COUSINS, SISTERS AND BROTHERS AND KITH AND KIN GALORE, BUT ONLY A HANDFUL OF AUNTS AND UNCLES, MOTHERS AND FATHERS.

BUT FOR ALL THAT HE WAS HARD, THE OLD MAN HAD SLEPT BEHIND BARRED AND BOLTED DOORS OF STOUT OAK. WHAT HAD HE FEARED, ABNER WONDERED? THE OLD BOOKS IN THE LOCKED LIBRARY? THAT GREAT ROOM HAD ALWAYS BEEN FORBIDDEN TO THE CHILDREN. WITH ITS ROWS AND ROWS OF ANCIENT, CRUMBLING BOOKS OF ARCANE LORE. ABNER COULD EVEN REMEMBER SOME OF THE TITLES, LIKE ALHAZRED'S **NECRONOMICON** AND THE **UNAUSSPRECHLICHEN KULTEN** OF VON JUNZT.

YES, AND HE REMEMBERED HOW OLD EZEKIEL HAD FLED THE LIBRARY ONE LIGHTNING-CRAZED NIGHT, HOW HIS EYES HAD STARED AND HIS LIPS TREMBLED WITH NAMELESS DREAD.

OR PERHAPS... PERHAPS EZEKIEL FEARED ABNER HIMSELF. FEARED HIS **HATRED**... BUT WHAT HARM COULD A PUNY LAD OF SEVEN POSSIBLY HAVE DONE TO SO TOUGH AND LEATHERY AN OLD BUZZARD AS EZEKIEL?

"EF YEW DO RUN AWAY, BOY", THE OLD MAN HAD ONCE TOLD HIM, "BE SURE YEW'LL BE BACK. AIN'T NO WAY YEW'LL FIT IN AOUTSIDE. YEW'RE **DIFFERENT**, BOY, DIFFERENT. LIKE ALL THE WHITLOCKS. AN' AS TIME GOES ON YEW'LL BECOME **MORE** DIFFERENT. ME, I'M LEAST DIFFERENT OF ALL, WHICH IS WHY I'M HERE A-TAKIN' KEER OF YEW ALL. HEH, HEH, HEH!"

AND SLOWLY, SLOWLY HE HAD PULLED THE GLOVE OFF HIS LEFT HAND, THE HAND HE **ALWAYS** KEPT COVERED...

ABNER REMEMBERED IT NOW, AS HE ALWAYS REMEMBERED IT: THE SIGHT OF THOSE FIVE, LONG, THICK WHITE **WORMS** TWINING WHERE EZEKIEL'S FINGERS AUGHT TO HAVE BEEN!

Church Of The White Zone

by Robin Parry

The fabled systemless scenario presents numerous problems for the referee, and (not least) the player, if the groundwork hasn't been sufficiently well- laid and embellish -ments and statistics inserted by the **GM**. The main difficulty in writing such an adventure is to assemble material that doesn't render the whole thing exclusive of one or more systems. This could quite easily be done by the inclusion of matter which is incompatible with a specific game. In order to avoid this, it is necessary to be rather general, perhaps even a trifle vague at times, particularly when dealing with such controversial topics as *magic* and *religion*.

Nevertheless, this material will attempt to outline the state of faith and deism in **Scatophagium** and trust to the referee and his chosen rules to provide the refinements needed for his system.

The first section is a general guide to religions in Scatophagium, and may be read by anyone with an interest in the town. The second section is a description of two religious establishments, either (or both) of which can be used as the basis for an adventure.

Principal Churches and Sects of Scatophagium:

In a world where the gods are very real and influence the day-to-day lives of the inhabitants directly, by the agencies of priests and their magic, it is to be expected that certain religious factions maintain a firm grip upon the reins of power. Indeed it is surprising that more towns and cities are not like **Brennit**, a hundred miles north of Scatophagium, a pan-theocratic conurbation completely dominated by several powerful and influential sects. Over two thirds of the population of Brennit is made up of priests and novices - the remainder are laymen and women employed in the various temples and theological colleges, either as menial staff or mercenaries. For the most part, even the defence of the city is accomplished by priest-warriors and reverand marines.

CHESSUM:

Many of the churches in Scatophagium have their headquarters in Brennit, where there is a current power struggle between the like creeds of *Holy Orthodox Fundamentalists* (H.O.F.) and the *Sacred Fundamental Orthodoxy* (S.F.O.)- both dedicated to **Chessum** and equally ruthless in their determination to be his major representative. Both cults fervently send out mercenaries to gain converts to their particular doctrine, although there is little difference between the two. Roughly, equal numbers of adherents and shrines are boasted by each of them, and their gross turnovers are similar - this is very important, as the priests of this merchant's creed believe the church is nothing if not a prosperous business.

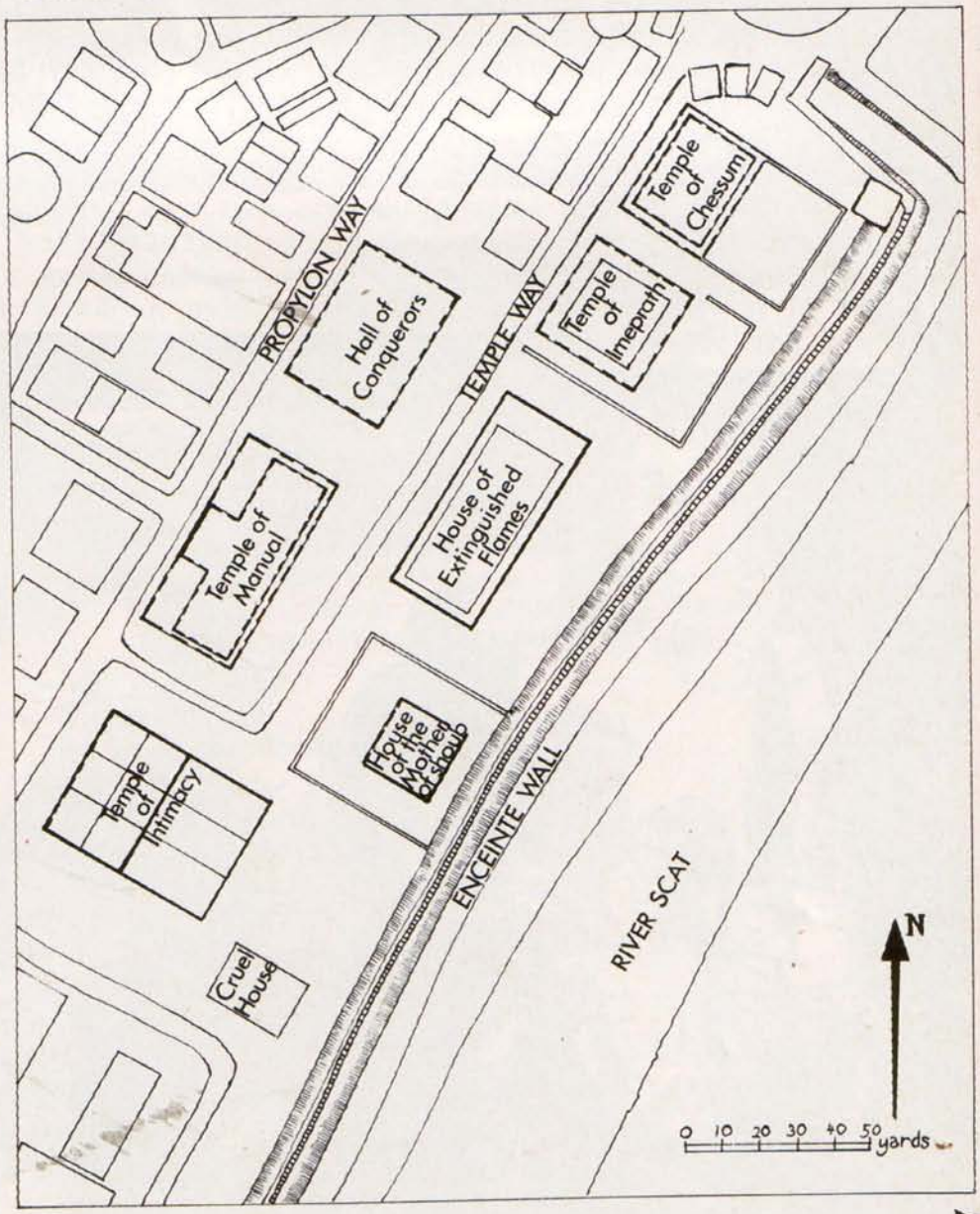
The Holy Orthodox Fundamentalists have succeeded in converting **Vector** of **Vertex Hall** to their faith, away from his outmoded heathen veneration of **Manud**, and are busy consolidating their position by building a new temple and re-dedicating the *Basilica*, one of Scatophagium's oldest and most important buildings.

The *H.O.F* and *S.F.O* together comprise the dominant religious persuasion in Scatophagium, if not in numbers then certainly in power. Both sects offer clear-cut but expensive paths to salvation by the grace and beneficence of **Chessum**. Several sub-sects exist and most noteable are the *Reclaimants*, a secretive group who serve Chessum by disciplined enrichment of the initiated elite, believing that all wealth comes from their god and that to acquire it from a non-believer is merely reclaiming what is rightfully his. This, incidentally makes it possible for a true believer to afford Chessum's bounty and grace.

Chessum is characterised by shrewd-ness and intelligence, thoroughness and diligence in work. His symbols are the **balances**, the **abacus** and the **coin**, and occasionally a **closed book** and **pen** signifying the completed work. **Colours**: Red and Yellow, usually muted to light Brown in the clergy's vestments.

The work of the Chessumite priesthood involves the education of the children of the wealthy in church schools, where the faith is engendered along with mercantile skills. Divination is of prime concern, chiefly that of the fortunes of their various interests and the futures of their commodities. Vast wealth has been accrued in this fashion and most of it is channeled back to Brennit HQ.

The offspring of a union between **Imeprath** and **Manud**, Chessum has superseded his father in Scatophagium as he does in legend; the stories of all the gods are intertwined, and the Manudians



maintain that the descent to the 'ocean beneath the ocean' undertaken by Manud enhanced the god's powers and transformed him - the Chessumites state that the transformation was the result of Manud's unsuccessful attempt to defeat the entropy tides of **ENOC.** As Manud is portrayed as emerging fish-headed from his sub-aquatic foray, so Chessum is depicted as helping his poor defeated father from the waves after defending the world in his absence.

MANUD:

Where there now stands a collosal set of golden balances behind and above the high altar of the Basilica, there previously sat the fish-headed effigy of Manud, now relegated to his temple near the **Propylon.** For many centuries Manud has been worshipped near the banks of the **River Scat**, in fact as long as there has been a fishing community. Indeed it was fortuitous that the Manudian faith was in ascendency on **Fulthess** when **Cathetus Vertex** sailed from there and debarked at Scat. The fact that Cathetus' beliefs coincided with those of the indiginous people alleviated much stress in the first years of Vertex' rule of the area.

A number of sects worship Manud and have temples and churches in Scat. Principle among these is the **Just Hand**, formerly Vector's faith, and still adhered to by some members of his family. This cult once embraced the cream of Scat. Society (such as it was) and held services regularly and, on special occasions, in the Basilica. The **Temple of the Just Hand** now houses the displaced statue of Manud and though still rich, more people are leaving than are joining. Within the *Enceinte*, it seems the Manudians will dwindle to the status of a lesser religion. However, towards the other end of town this is not the case. The **Temple of Inspired Sanation** does brisk business. This benevolent and austere sect is in close contact with the common people, dedicated to the alleviation of suffering, and has a large, regularly attending congregation made up mainly of labourers and craftsmen.

South of the river, many of the fishers, whose families traditionally worshipped Manud at shrines on the shore at **Scatmouth** (two miles west where the river meets the **Ladrone Sea**), have entered the established churches, as Scat. has become more urban in the last two hundred years. All Manudian cults hold the principles of truth and justice highly, the priests and pedagogues teaching that an ordered universe is achievable by the awareness of Manud's will, which constitutes **destiny.**

Schools exist in many of the churches and temples, where knowledge of all things is prized, though there is perhaps an emphasis on understanding the laws of nature and man. Experimentation is frowned upon, as it is in all the temples and schools dedicated to any of the gods. Only too often have the gods seen novel ideas lead a culture to disbelief in their omnipotence and have had to exert their influence in order to reassert themselves.

The symbols of Manud are the **open book** revealing the unchangeable word of the father of gods, the **Hand** and **Fish,** sometimes blind, and occasionally the **Baton of Justice. Colours**: blues and greys.

IMEPRATH:

Imeprath, also known locally as **Lysis the Healer**, is the third major deity of Scat. The mother of Chessum and **Arneche,** she is seen as a naturalistic provider sometimes associated with Manud. Pictured as a noble agrarian peasant protecting children or sowing seed or reaping a harvest. As such, she is worshipped by farmers and pioneers in their homes, and by groups of individuals

coming together with no rigid church environment, although there are organised establishments dedicated to her such as abbeys, agricultural councils and pioneering alliances.

A **Temple to Imeprath** is maintained in the *Enceinte* by the **Urban Friars**, and several ministers live in the town caring for the faithful and holding services whenever there is need, but the majority of her clergy are flung far and wide as village priests or travelling pastors. Her creed is that love transcends death, that the unity amongst her flock is their greatest strength, and that the needy must not be refused, nor evil tolerated.

Imeprath is represented by small clay, wood or metal statuettes situated over many rural hearths. Her symbols include the **reaping hook** and **chalice** and her colours are **green** and **gold.**

ARNECHE:

Most individuals pass through a period of dedication to Arneche, the goddess of passion. Some become permanent adherents to her cult and live as priests or priestesses in her **Temple of Intimacy**, where orgiastic rites and spontaneous benevolence characterise her worship. As many courtesans and libertines are among the faithful, the cult is quite powerful. Her colours are **crimson, lilac** and **violet**. Many symbols are used and include the **cat, snakes** (particularly the Hooded Cobra) and the **seven-pointed star** (Septagram).

SHCUB:

The mother of Shcub has no commonly used name. She is referred to very rarely. Dark and mysterious, little is known to the uninitiated of the rites and sacrifices performed by her worshippers. She is believed to dominate the night and inspire madness. A small temple stands within a walled garden near the Propylon. It appears deserted, but is kept tidy and clean. No images adorn it and its grey walls are painted.

Before his union with Imeprath, Manud is believed to have consorted with the mother of the night and sired by her an heir. A dark reflection of himself, Shcub favours retribution and vengeance where his father stands for justice; *discipline and dominion* replace *destiny and order* in his priorities. Two groups, known as **Erinites** and **Sistrines**, are made up chiefly of warriors, and worship Shcub in his **Hall of Conquerors**. Their strict adherence to commands is notable and makes them loyal and dependable soldiers. Within their ranks however, lurks the secret sect of **Corundum Stammites,** who are outlawed in many centres of civilisation due to their predilection for ruthless and careful subjugation of whatever societies they obtain a toe-hold in. Drawing their members from the cream of the congregation, the sect is composed of high ranking officials and officers. They work quietly in their positions of power to advance their fellow members' interests, using intimidation, assassination and coercion to achieve their aim of a strictly disciplined elite, and a world held in thrall by themselves in the name of Shcub.

The **Hall of Conquerors** is bedecked with weaponry and armour, trophies and pennants. A suit of fine and costly armour, draped with offerings of the best weaponry, is the focus of devotions, and stands out in the Hall in place of an altar or statue. It is believed that the armour will be imbued with the spirit of their god or his servants in times of need. Symbols are the **chevron** and the **hammer**, and his wear - **red** and **silver**.

DIXUS:

Sometimes erroneously associated with Arneche, **Love Lies Bleeding** is an order dedicated to **Dixus**, the god of lust and greed. It is outlawed in some places (but not Scat.) due to its sadistic and unconstrained rites which involve blood sacrifice, enraged beasts, various narcotics and brutality. A temple with grounds is located south of the river near the **Hippodrome**, where the order perform their rituals.

Several **'Cruel Houses'**, as they are known, are scattered about the town for ministration to the needs of the faithful, the finest of these is to be found neighbouring the temples in the *Enceinte*. The **whip** and the **cangue** are symbols of Dixus, whose priests and priestesses wear any colour, quite often in startling combinations. The **mule** is considered a sacred animal by the order.

FOSS TYNAN:

Both Dixus and Foss Tynan are offspring of the mother of Shcub, though who is responsible for fathering them, if this was indeed necessary, is not known. Conjecture has it that the mother was united with **Noneness** in order to conceive the pair, or that **ENOC** is the embarrassed father; if so, he does not claim them.

The Church of the White Zone (for loading and unloading only) venerates **Foss Tynan**. Poorly organised, this cult promotes self interest above the good of the church (which has been used as a fac -tory, whorehouse, prison and shop).Their cynical creed, that any means may be employed to gain power, frequently leads to schism within the priesthood, hence the opportunities to exploit supplicants to the utmost is never allowed to pass.

The church is tolerated as it rarely becomes enough to present a threat to the established orders. The culling process, which is the result of mutual predation, ensures that the upper echelons are, almost without exception, ruthless and rapacious individuals. They are without the scruples or dedication neces sary to maintain the deity's interest, hence the continual replacement of high priests.

There is only one Church of the White Zone in Scat, and that is close to the **Pipe Market**, towards the western end of town. The clergy wear what they choose. A threaded **nut and bolt** like ornament adorns their altars.

FATHER JOHN:

No established church is dedicated to the **Galliman**, or Father John as he is also known, but his itinerant priests may be found on the road, in theatres and inns, in refugee camps etc. Some established havens exist, such as **Holy Way** stations and shrines. Referred to as the **cosmic juggler**, he is the patron of travelling peoples, entertainers and musicians, believed to walk the earth in various guises - usually accompanied by a small dog **(OZNOB)**. This romantic and humourous deity is also the spiritual champion of chance and dexterity, and so is revered by some gamblers and professional gamesters.

Stories are told of him and his many exploits (usually involving a cheerful disregard for the wills of the other gods) but are not written, for his tradition is oral. **Laughter** is regarded by his devotees as his sign, as is a **wheel** (sometimes broken), the **rhododendron** and small **mongrel dogs. Jugglers' clubs** and benign **mushrooms** are also taken as tokens of his religion.

SLEARTEI:

Members of the **Thelman** creed venerate **Sleartei** in temporary free houses established where the capricious priests choose. Somewhat ineffectual through lack of structure, and regarded as a last resort for the religiously estranged, there are those dedicated to the creed who will be found, when funds permit, holding impromptu services in public houses, bordellos, etc.

Frequently drunk, the whimsical clergy exhibit fits of kindness and cruelty, often speaking in tongues, occasionally entering the temples of other religions, during services, in order to make conversions or just for the crack. The creed flourishes in gaols.

Offspring of **Arneche** and **Dixus**, Sleartei is the patron of sleep, freedom and trickery, held in high esteem by many thieves and con artists. The priests are known as 'fellows' and employ **veils, mirrors** and **smoke** as symbols.

ENOC:

Amongst the other temples situated near the **Propylon**, there rears a dark and brooding structure known as the **House of Extinguished Flames**, where the obsidian figure of **ENOC** peers from beneath a cowl at all who enter, reminding them that he will visit everyone in time with his gift of death. His huge statue stands at the end of a wide and lofty hall built of bricks made from the ashes of the dead, furnished with many urns and caskets. No windows pierce the walls, and it is said that no flame will burn within them. Light is provided by lanterns stocked with phosphorescent insects, but these soon die even when provided with ample food and water.

ENOC is the god of death and is worshipped by those who fear his proximity, and those who wish to further his cause. His colour is **black** and his symbols include a **candle snuffer** and an **inverted trident.**

OTHER SECTS:

Dark and nameless cults exist wherein

Goroth, Nos and **Tch'h** are honoured. In towns and cities these are usually secret, and Scat. is no exception. The members of these cults seek to promote suffering for the uninitiated through their joint creed of hate, impotence and ignorance. The more pain that is caused thereby, the more favour an adherent can earn with his gods. Little or nothing is heard of these groups for months, then a gross and pointless act of destruction will proclaim the continued existence of the Acolytes.

The signs of this deplorable triad are continually changing, but a **burning ship** and **dismembered animals** have been recognised as their tokens.

A number of **nature cults** exist, and the druids and priests are encountered in Scat. from time to time, but these are not represented by temples in the town.

The Enceinte

The Enceinte is the larger walled area surrounding the **Motte**, an enormous earth mound predating human habitation. The area is roughly eight hundred yards by four hundred yards, kidney shaped, and within the walls dwell the upper classes of Scat. Within the Enceinte, and atop the motte, is a smaller walled area enclosing **Lord Vector's** Hall, the **Basilica** and the **Battery**.

Entry for the Enceinte via the Propylon is allowed on payment of a fee, for which a character receives a dated pass whereon his name and stated business will be recorded. He must leave the Enceinte before sunset on that date. Passes of non-residents are checked regularly within the walled area by the men at arms of the Battery, who also patrol the walls.

The temples are situated between the wall that runs roughly parallel to the river and the Propylon Way.

All the temples (with the possible exception of the **House of the Mother of Shcub**) will be inhabited and guarded by priests and/or their men at arms.

They are open to any plausible visitor during the hours of daylight. It is likely that an adventurer's pass may be examined, or if he looks impressive enough, he might be asked to sign a visitor's book.

The Temple of Inspired Sanation

A flat roofed building with an overhanging, plain upper storey supported by a square columned ground floor. It stands just off the **Byrne,** a thoroughfare that devides the middle classes from the lower, and the Temple is on the periphery of the very lowest class area of Scat.

The temple's work, of healing and caring for the sick is over-seen by the arch-priest, **Father Pharatric**, a lean and tall white-haired man of late middle years. Grey robes embroided with a small white Hand motif are worn by all the staff of the Temple, and Pharatric bears no symbol of office other than a ring fashioned as a hand grasping a fish, possibly with protective properties. The priests generally bear no weapons, but most are skilled with staff and net, which they use to subdue rather than harm possible attackers. Assaults on these benevolent fellows are rare.

Local Doomsters (justiciars) were, until recently, drawn from the ranks of the Manudian priesthood, but are now replaced by Chessumites. Pharatric was a respected doomster, and despite his not being one now, his word is still accepted by the authorities and plaintiffs alike when he gives judgement in a dispute.

The Temple does a small trade in the sale of rare herbs, but as with their healing, they will only deal with their own flock and other Manudians, or those they know to be reputable citizens.

Twelve priests and four novices live in the building, and several others associated with it, travel about, doing the work of Manud (and the occasional bit of adventuring).

Of the resident priests, **Kerrivine** ranks second to Pharatric and performs the function of scribe and record keeper; he is small, thin and dark-haired, slightly balding with an intense manner, but quick to laughter. He is of middle years.

Next in the Temple's Heirarchy are **Stunsail** the elderly chief healer, and **Lume van Tollseld**, the powerfully built giant of a herbmaster - whose poor but very loud singing can often be heard coming from the flat roof where he tends his plants. He likes nothing better than a practical joke, and will create showers with his watering can for those below on sunny days, or dangle a string with a powerful magnet attached, to the annoyance of passers-by wearing helmets, etc.

Throyd is the beefy cook, whose knowledge of legend is unsurpassed. **Follard** is Stunsail's deputy in the infirmary and, although of no more than a medium build, is the temple's most able warrior; he was a military man for many years before turning to Manud in his maturity.

The remainder of the priests are mature young men serving as assistants to the afore named. The novices under Kerrivine's supervision maintain the building, run errands, help in the infirmary and herbarium, and on top of this spend many hours learning the Manudian rites and invocations.

GROUND FLOOR:

All the ground floor rooms have ten foot ceilings and grey tiled floors. Most of the walls are whitewashed.

1 and 2. The temple has two vestibules or **porches** which are open to the street, where supplicants can come and confer with priests. Beggars sleep here at night and plead for arms during the day.

3. An office for donations and temple business. It has a table and four chairs, several ledgers, pens and ink. No more than petty cash is ever kept here. Kerrivine, or more likely, his young assistant underscribe **Gevern,** will be working here during the day.

4. The Main Hall is plain and airy. The walls in the hall are painted pale blue, whereas the other rooms are white-washed. A large table and three heavy chairs are at the north end, where **Pharatric, Stunsail** and **Kerrevine** sit when giving judgement. In the centre of the hall sits the image of **Manud**, carved of grey veined serpentine with a head resembling that of a salmon.

Services are held here every seven days, on the days preceding each quarter moon. Major veneration takes place at the new moon, particularly the first and last of the year (as noted elsewhere, the largest moon waxes and wanes each of the 28-day months of the Scatophagium calendar. The night of the 28th is the *"dark of the moon"*,*"new moon" or "no moon"*. There are thirteen months).

Two trees and a pond are visible through large windows in the west wall, which has doors at either end leading to the cloister.

The openings to the north and south of the Hall are archways, the southern of these leading to:

5. This is used as a **shop** for the sale of herbs and medicines. The faithful enter through here when attending services. Half a dozen staves and nets are kept here under a table, on which are numerous small pots, bottles and bundles.

6. The Cloister gives access to the stairs leading up, and to the gardens where two weeping ash trees flank a deep pond stocked with blue and grey carp. Priests will sit out here on pleasant days discussing or meditating beside the pool.

7 and 8. The Infirmary is comprised of four rooms, and boasts two wards; the northern of the two (7) is reserved for special patients (contagious, dangerous or wealthy) and is occasionally used to put up excess priests when inter-church visitors arrive.

The large corner rooms are stores and surgeries where healing arts are practised, medicines are stored, and novices sleep at night, caring for the nocturnal needs of the sick.

1st FLOOR:

All the upper floor rooms are eight feet high, have wooden floors, whitewashed walls and heavy beams spanning the ceiling.

Broad steps lead up from the cloister then divide, north and south; both passages leading to:

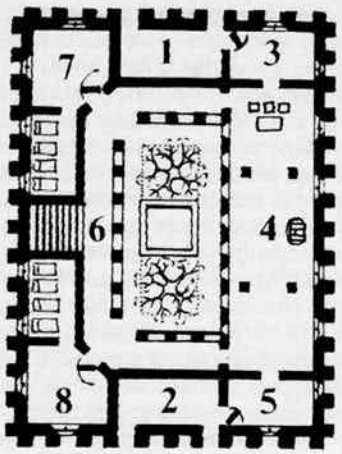
9. The Balcony, from where it is possible to look down into the garden from the openings between the pillars. The roof overhangs the balcony by about three feet.

10. Pharatric's rooms are clean and sparsely furnished and lit by a large (six foot square) skylight fashioned of muscovite (mica) in an iron frame (all rooms on this floor except **17 & 18** have these lights, and no windows pierce the outer walls).

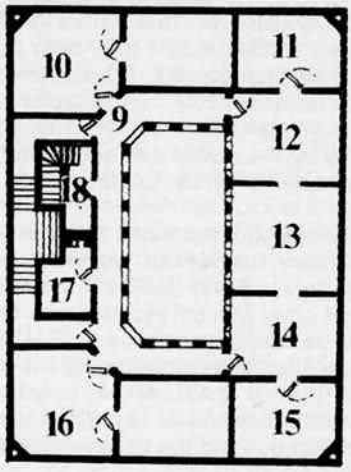
Facing the door is a table covered by an embroidered cloth, upon which is a large and finely made book of the Manudian law, two candlesticks, shaped like hands holding fish-shaped candles (they are not obviously valuable, but are made of **grey onyx**), a plain maroon rod with a small white metal hand at one end (a potent object against wrongdoers) and a casket (not locked) which contains some valu-able trinkets. Also in the room are a large

TEMPLE OF INSPIRED SANATION

SCALE: 0 10 20 30 40



GROUND FLOOR



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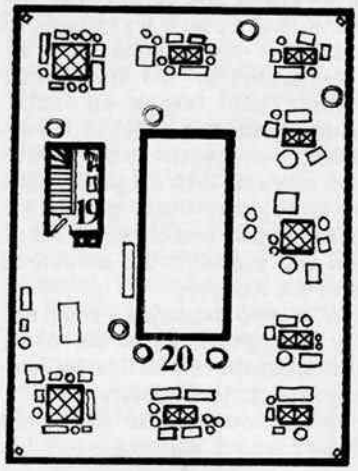

ROOF

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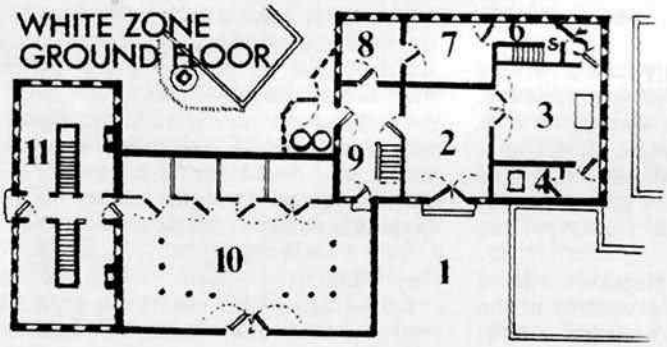
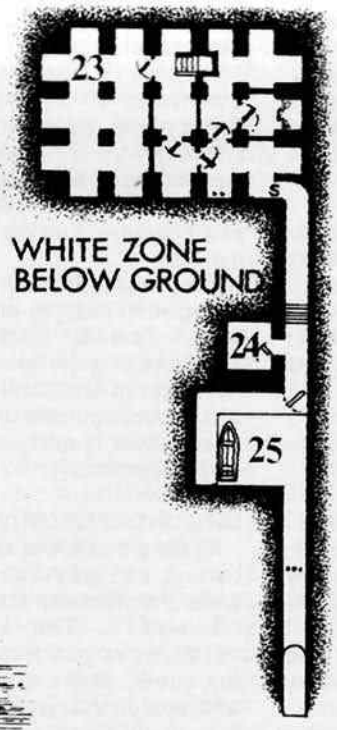
CHURCH OF THE WHITE ZONE





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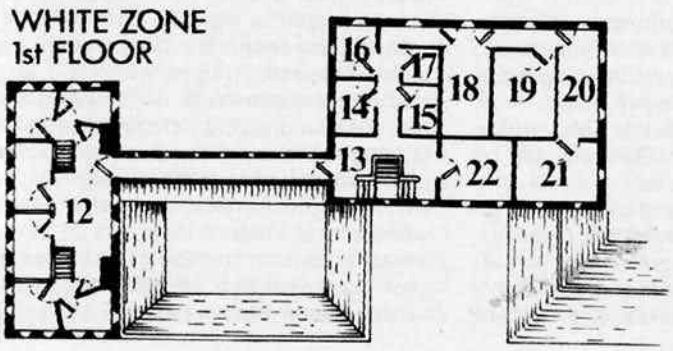
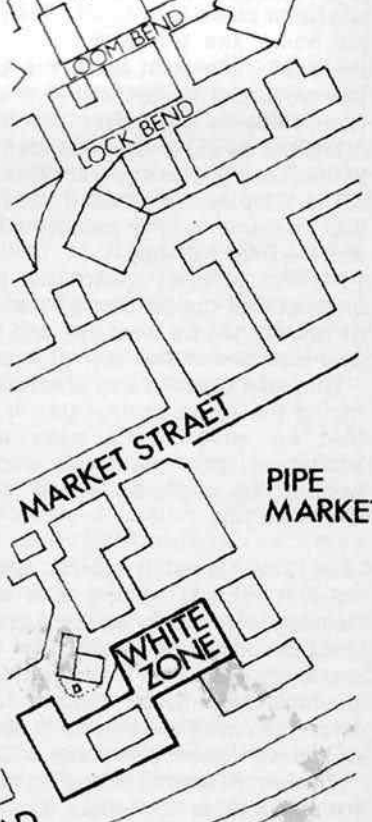




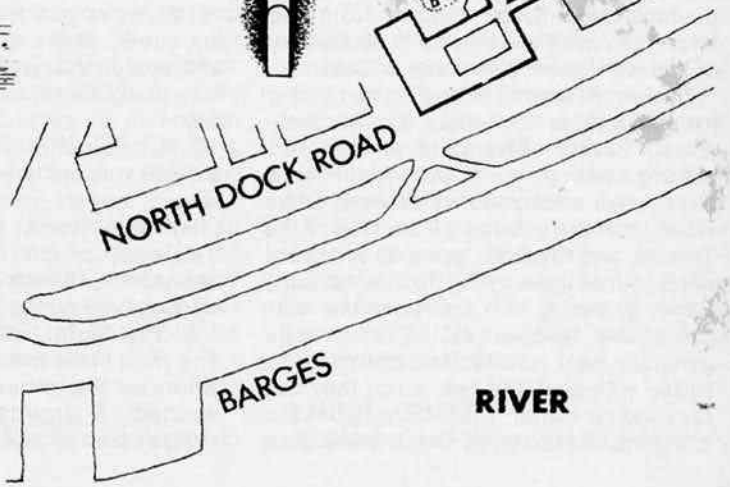


table and six chairs, wine and goblets.

A door in the east wall leads to Pharatric's bedchamber, where there are a few personal belongings, a plain bed and a locked chest - in which are fine robes and cerements, a goblet and chalice and other churchly items. All are blessed and have magical auras, though they are not very valuable in themselves.

11. This is a priest's dormitory where **Stunsall** and three younger priests sleep.

12, 13 and 14. These are common rooms for the temple clergy (13 is a dining hall).

15. This is another dormitory where **Follard, Throyd** and three others sleep.

16. Kerrevine's chambers, in contrast to Pharatric's, are cluttered and untidy; the walls are hidden by bookshelves, scroll stands, and charts; many interesting items are scattered about upon the tables and shelves and include an astrolabe, bottles of herb extracts (some lethal), scrolls, strange bones and some ecclesiastical chimes precariously balanced on a chair, just out of sight under the edge of a table.

Through the door to the east is **Kerrevine's** bedchamber which he shares with **Lume**. Equally cluttered, this room has three beds, the third is not used for sleeping. Rather, its hollow base is the stout receptical for the temple's funds as well as a number of enchanted items collected by the church over the years, either in payment for services, or found by the peripatetic clergy on their travels. The emanations from this treasure trove disturb the sleep of any who would use the bed, and although sealing glamours are cast about the box, the effusion is merely muffled.

17. This **Small Kitchen** has shelves with foodstuffs and crockery, a small range, a water barrel and a table with drawers holding cutlery.

18. A Small Room adjoining the kitchen has steps which lead up to the roof. Under the steps (behind the door) is storage space for herbs, drying out in bunches hung from hooks.

19. A low (5 feet high) room. This is used to store Lume's tools, and some tender valuable specimens.

20. The roof (or the Herbarium as Lume refers to it). A four and a half foot wall surrounds the outer edge and a three foot wall the inner. The roof is made of flags laid on cross-beams and sealed with pitch. Water drains to the corners and down narrow conduits in the walls. The skylights are raised about a foot above the level of the roof brick surrounds. Clustered about them, and all over the roof, are pots, troughs, and planters and such where grow many different herbs. All of these flourish under Lume's care and he is able to grow plants not usually able to survive in the area. A number of water barrels stand around collecting rain. A slate table and bench are near the door, which is locked and barred at night, as are the doors in **3.** and **5.**

SCENARIO HOOKS:

1). Adventurers meet **Loz the Cormorant** (secretly a **Goroth** cultist), a sleek fighter who will complain of the avarice of the **Temple of Inspired Sanation**, and how recently, when in need of aid, he was taken by unwise friends where he was stripped of all his wealth and a priceless enchanted bow. The facts of the matter are that Loz entered the temple as one of the faithful during a service and slipped into the garden, where he attempted to defile the pool. He was subdued and judged. In order to pay his fine he had to hand over his bow. The bow is quite ordinary and has been kept for him by the priests in case he returns with the fine (which was slightly less than the worth of the weapon). He will promise the players vast booty if they assist him in regaining his 'prize'. If they fall for this, he may assist them to enter the Temple, but will insist on defiling the pool once inside; an unreliable ally at best.

2). Possibly as a result of the above, if the players don't go for Loz's plan, and inform the Temple of his intentions, they may be hired to guard the place against Loz and his cronies, who, even if the players aren't enlisted, will attempt his mischief with some others. The temple are aware of his ill-regard for them and may have heard that he is planning something. The offer of employment can be made to the characters if they visit the Temple without ever encountering Loz.

3). Enrulkan Hyacinth is an extremely rare and efficacious herb. Guess who is the only person within five hundred miles to possess a specimen? Right! - and he takes it downstairs with him at night (no fool our **Lume**!).

The bulb is poisonous in its raw state, but sends up a cluster of green tubular flowers once a year. These are carefully dried to a pale powder (some of which is in room **16**) after the flower wilts - and this is used by ritualists to visit other spheres. The plant has powerful medicinal properties and the Temple will not sell either the powder or the bulbs.

Wrestlingthrust of **Fothe** - who lives south on the **Byrne** - an otherwise law-abiding Sage of early maturity, would give a great deal to possess the plant or its by-products. He is tall and wiry, shabby and impatient, well versed in metaphysics and the law of the planes, and has some knowledge of wizardry. He knows little of the plant other than its use in ritual magic, its description and that Lume has some. He will not tell the players he is penniless.

The Church of the White Zone (for Loading and Unloading only)

The Church of the White Zone is a peculiar place, even by Scatophagium standards. Situated on the **North Dock Road**, its anonymous facade looks out over the river. It is two stories high and is set back from the road. In front of the heavy double doors is a small square of open ground flanked on the west by stables and on the east by a shop - both of these are single storied.

1. The Square is whitened with ashes and lime, and it provides a convenient place for travellers to step off the busy North Dock Road for a momentary rest or to get their bearings. If any characters are unwise enough to step onto the white zone, they stand a high chance of being hailed from the church's front door, by a friendly looking man in a plain off-white smock and gaiters. He is the middle-aged **Ecclesiarch Serpulo** who, when he has nothing better to do, waits for unwary strangers to stray onto the white zone. He will approach with an ingratiating demeanour explaining that alas, the character has trespassed upon sanctified ground. Although that is quite a serious matter, it can be put right by the offender(s) merely by stepping into the church for a very brief blessing. He will be quite insistent in a firm, but gentle manner, and if he manages to get anyone into the church, will procede to offer wine to them while they await the ceremony to be prepared. The wine will be drugged and if drunk it is doubtful that the character will be seen again.

Serpulo is a man of middle size who wears leather armour under his smock. He has ample spells to defend himself and to perform the god's will, which is that his clergy should exploit the world for everything possible. Serpulo will walk with an innocent-looking staff, that can administer staggering damage if need be. He and all the staff are heavily perfumed.

2. The Hall. The steel-reinforced oak doors lead to the Hall - which has a wooden floor, plastered walls and ceiling - where characters will be asked to wait on the benches provided. There is a heavy scent of incense. Here they will be made comfortable while the chapel **(3.)** is prepared. If a visitor to the church does not drink the wine, but is still persuaded to attend a ceremony, they will be eventually ushered into the chapel, which is dominated by a large altar with a nut and bolt-like centrepiece. Hung on the walls are many crutches and braces, false noses and eye patches, which Serpulo may explain, have been left by the invalids cured by the worship of **Foss Tynan.** Incense is burned here continually. If a ceremony takes place, then assisting Serpulo will be **Canoness Papilla Wen**, a shriveled and ancient woman in long robes. She has the power to identify enemies of the church and deals with them swiftly and cruelly. This small fanatical woman is protected by magical means and despises any non-humans. Up to six church 'deacons' will attend the ceremony, filing in at the back of the chapel and closing the doors. The deacons are mercenary thugs hired by the church, and will assist any of the clergy if called.

4. The Confessional. A small anteroom to the south of the chapel leads to the confessional. It is entirely dark and the door is usually locked. A trapdoor in the floor provides quick escape for the staff if necessary.

5. Anteroom. To the north of the chapel, a door leads to another anteroom, where some manacles, chains and weapons are stored, with eight strange

vestments (maroon, with the back and abdomen cut away).

6. A Narrow Passage. This has a secret door in the wood panelled south wall leading to the crypt.

7 and 8. Offices. These deal with the church business and have desks, writing materials, ledgers of accounts and some samples of products (white zone snow storms, ointments, crutches, and wooden legs etc.) The drugged wine is also kept here.

9. The Watchroom is where the 'deacons' lounge around when not actually assaulting people. A cupboard holds some food and wine for the consumption of the deacons. A back door leads to a tiny yard where there are two large barrels full of water. Twenty five feet west of the yard's gate is a public well. A door to the south of the watchroom leads into the stableyard. Both of these doors and the double front doors are locked, bolted and barred at night.

10. The Stables have walls to the north where four horses and two wagons are kept along with some feed. A roof runs around the east, south and west walls, creating a covered area where crates and kegs are stored. Double gates open onto the road.

11. A small door to the west of the stable yard leads into a **'house of ill repute'**, whose clients may leave their horses in the stableyard.

12. The clients are escorted upstairs to the **Lounge,** where they will meet a priest of the White Zone. This priest will take the money for the services rendered, and afterwards invite them to the White Zone for more 'fun' (He may employ a simple ruse such as the client's wife has come looking for him and that there is another way out). A passage connects the two buildings, running over the stalls, emerging onto the **landing (13)** of the church.

The client will be asked to descend the stairs (either for more fun or to escape) and will encounter the deacons, who will detain him as a tresspasser. He must hand over all valuable items to avoid a beating or worse.

14 to 17. are **priests' cells,** where their possessions are kept (valuables are either well secreted or hidden elsewhere).

18. The Dining Room has a long table and ten chairs, and **The Storeroom (19)** has a small stove, fuel and foodstuffs to the east, while the west side of the room is piled with old clothes, saddles and blankets, weapons, backpacks - in fact all the less valuable booty from the church's victims, which is sold bit by bit, by way of wages.

20 and 21. Serpulo's chambers are comfortably furnished, although nothing of value is left lying around.

22. Papilla Wen's room is empty except for a white square painted on the floor (where she sleeps) and a small flail.

The four priests - one to each cell - are all eager to do their bit for **Foss Tynan** and are capable fighters or magic weilders, though of low order. The Deacons sleep in **(11.)** and there are nine all together, three off-duty at any one time.

Serpulo, Papilla and the priests will keep the doors to their chambers locked whether in or out.

23. The Crypt is divided up by pillars and brick walls into a number of areas. There is a disgusting smell that may be evident as soon as the secret door is opened. All doors are kept locked in the crypt. The large area is a workroom, where four indentured children are chained to benches and forced to make items for sale.

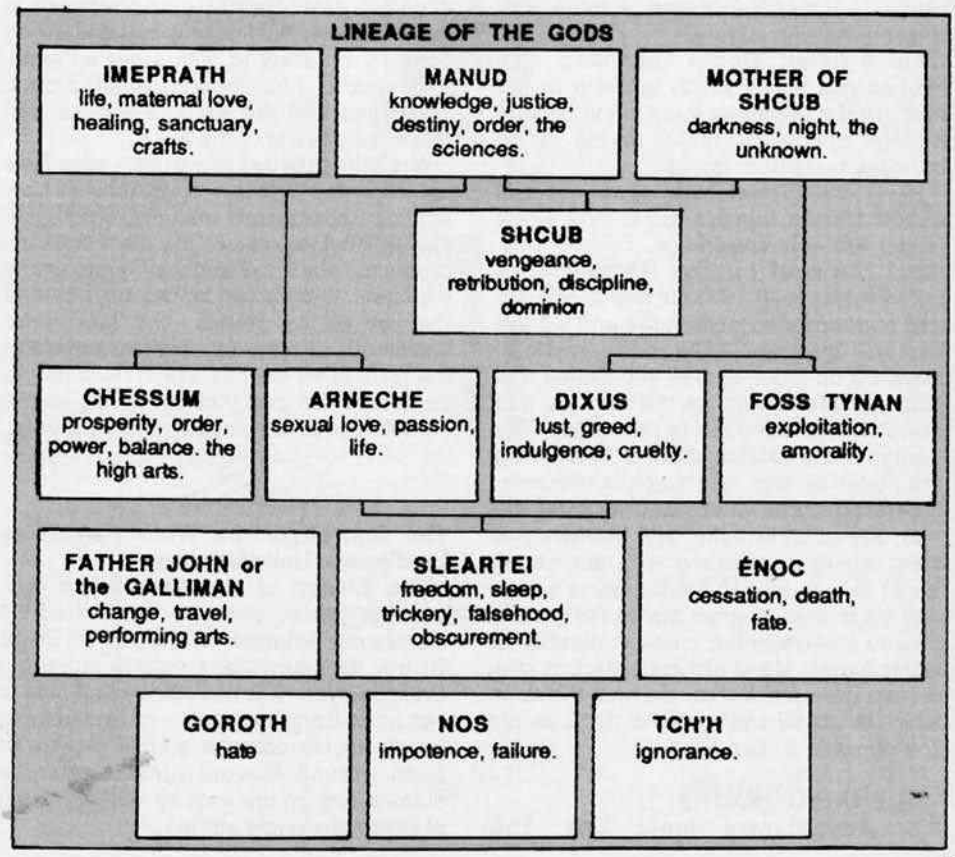
To the south of the stairs, the door leads to a small office. This in turn leads to a storage area with a secret door to the south east. The trapdoor in **(24.)** is above a ladder to the south. The door to the north leads to an area where victims' bodies are sometimes kept before disposal. The odour emanates from the final chamber, to the east, and is of nauseating intensity here. Slurping noises may be heard beyond the stout door, which is trapped, and double locked. Serpulo has the keys.

Beyond the door the smell is overpowering. An alcove forms the eastern end of the small room where boiling fumes of dark colours writhe and roil, almost filling the space with a vertical wall of oily smoke, protruding from which is the **Emunctory of Ross Tynan,** the manifestation of a part of the god, appearing as a fleshy duct dilating from completely closed to a diameter of three feet every ten seconds. Pale and slimy, it is covered with excrescences and growths. It has enormous power which, if the demented god has a mind to employ it (and he hasn't most of the time), can draw a player into the Emunctory towards a fate both disgusting and terminal. If Foss Tynan is coherent (about one day in three), the Emunctory can implant suggestions in a player's mind. Anyone coming this far will have a sickening body odour for many moons, regardless of the god's awarenesses. The duct will withdraw to its own plane or universe if hurt, but since it is virtually indestructible, this is not likely. The duct (when open) exerts a powerful sucking draught which will be hard to resist. Serpulo's treasures are hidden within the fumes in three small caskets and include gems and jewellery. The bodies of the victims of the church are sometimes fed into the Emunctory, where they become one with the deranged deity. Bodies not deemed fit for the god are weighted and dumped in the river.

The secret door leads to a passage that runs south and descends some steps. The door to **(24)** is open and inside are oars and poles, a bundle of clothing and some preserved food are in a sack near the door. There could be a supernatural or undead warden at this point.

At the end of the passage, the door is locked. It leads to a small subterranean quay, where a small rowing boat (no oars) is moored. The level of the water rises and falls with the river. The level is generaly higher in spring and autumn, and it's at its lowest in summer, when the boat can be rendered useless by the lack of water in the channel from the river. A heavy grating bars the channel further south, which is secured by a catch on the inside. The channel emerges as one of the openings in the bank of the river. Most of these openings discharge water and waste into the river from conduits under the town.

Dealings with the White Zone could involve rescuing the children (their indentures are legal, by the way), or investigating a disappearance of someone last heard of on his way to the 'house of ill repute' (Known as **Blanch's**).



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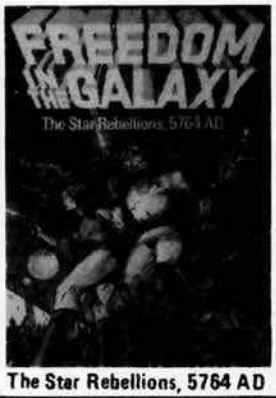

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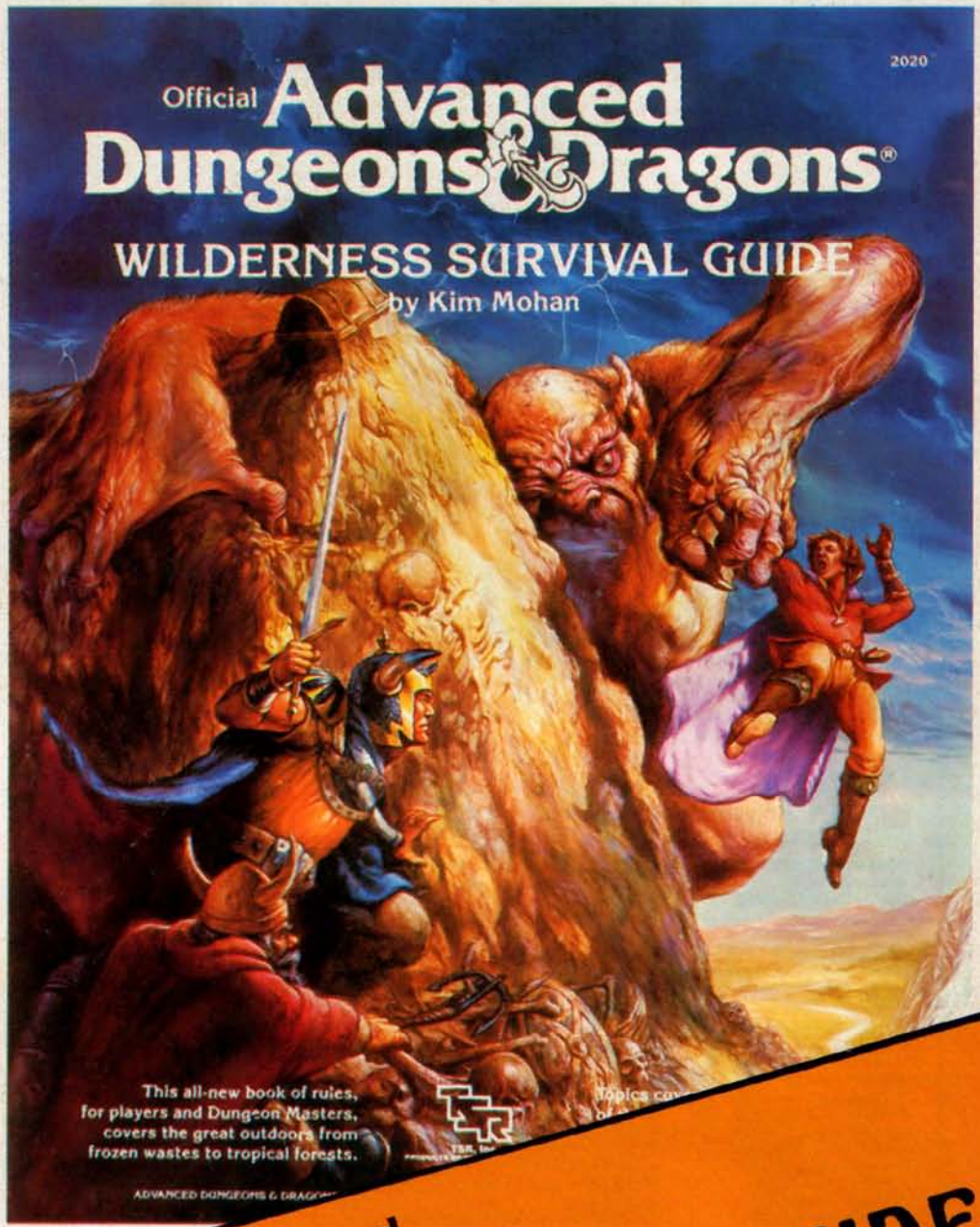
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